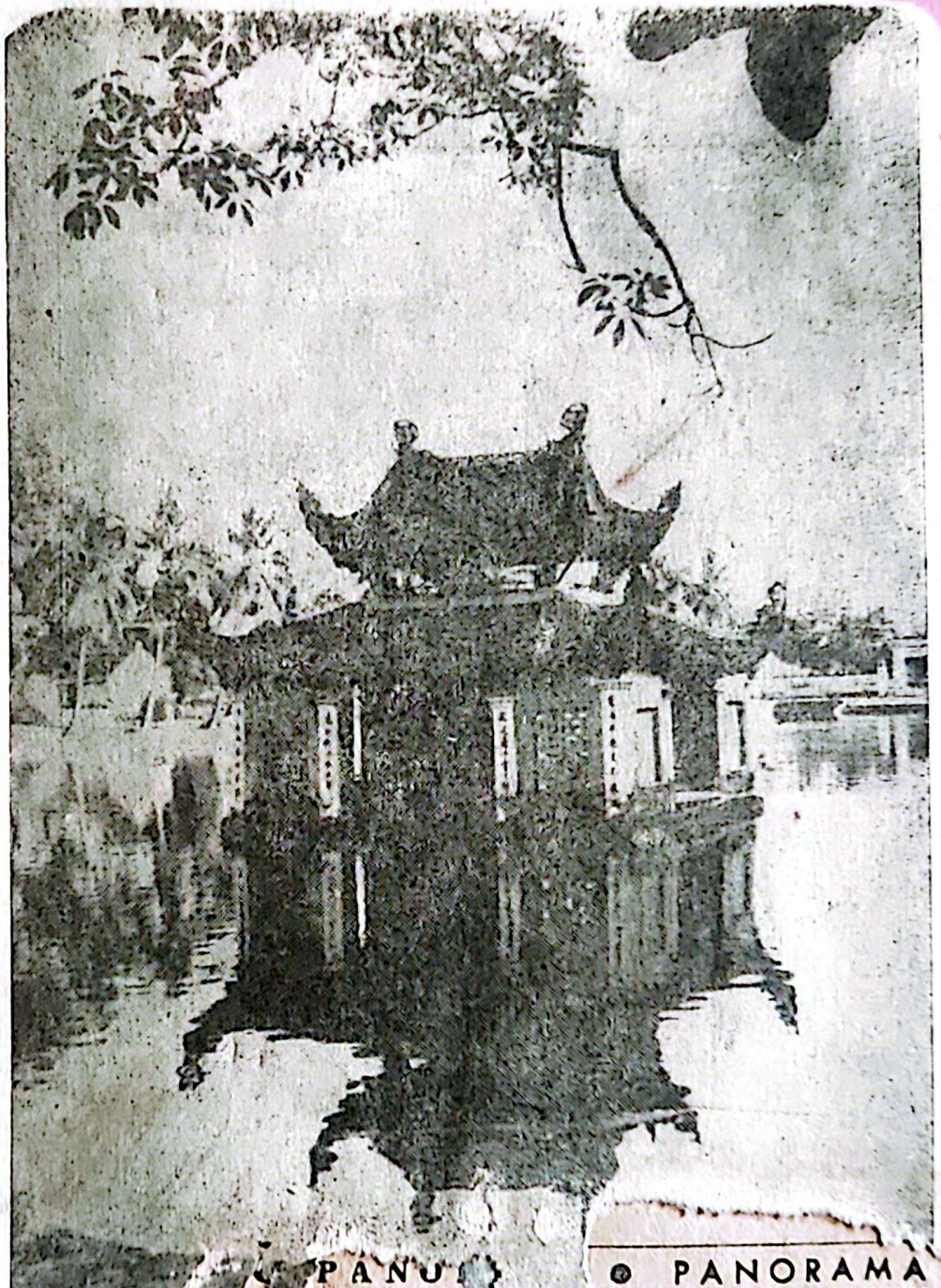
VIETNAM Courier

A MONTHLY REVIEW PUBLISHED IN ENGLISH, FRENCH AND RUSSIAN ★ 8/1988



- Good Will in Action (the Seventh Vietnamese Troop Withdrawal from Kampuchea)
- Vietnam's Viewpoints on Disarmament
- The Canonization of Martyrs in Vietnam
- International Seminar Brisbane II
- A Controversial Play

PANO ● PANORAMA

OUR GUESTS

● *On 11 May, at the Guest House of the Party Central Committee, a delegation of CPV CC, headed by General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh held talks with a delegation of the Communist Party of Germany (FRG) headed by its Chairman Herbert Mies.*

Photo: KIM HUNG

● *On 16 May, Tran Xuan Bach, Political Bureau member and Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee, received Math Ly, Political Bureau member of the People's Revolutionary Party of Kampuchea Central Committee and President of the Kampuchean Trade Unions Federation on an official friendship visit to Vietnam.*

● *On 8 June, Nguyen Van Linh, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee, received B.N. Chaplin, alternate member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Central Committee, deputy Foreign Minister, and special envoy of the Soviet leadership on a visit to Vietnam to inform Vietnamese leaders of the results of the Soviet-US Summit in Moscow.*

Photos: XUAN LAM

MORE ANCIENT LITHOPHONES FOUND

Khanh Son is a mountain district lying in the southwest of Phu Khanh province, 130km from Nha Trang City and 12km from Ba Ngoi town (Cam Ranh district) as the crow flies.

This area of fertile land is watered by rivers and forest streams and has a mild climate.

The first lithophone discovered in the country was found at Khanh Son in late 1978. Belonging to old Bo Bo Ren of Doc Gao, it consists of five stone bars. It had been played by the owner to welcome army hero Cau Van Be home. The second lithophone, consisting of six bars, was found on 25 March 1979, near Doc Gao by Phu Khanh cultural workers. It also belonged to Mr Bo Bo Ren.

The third lithophone was found in Ba Cum pine forest in June 1979. It belonged to Mr Bo Bo Nhay's family. The fourth was discovered early in 1980. Comprising eight bars, it belonged to Mr Cau Long. Thus in 1979 and 1980, six lithophones totalling 43 stone bars were found, not including three odd bars found at Hon Dung.

A campaign was launched by the Phu Khanh cultural service on 26 March 1987 to collect more of those ancient musical instruments. This had been made more and more difficult due to various reasons, including the lack of proper explanation work with, and adequate compensation for, their owners. On 27 March 1987 old Bo Bo Ren agreed to take the collecting team to Doc Gao (where the first lithophone had been found) and show them the seventh set of stone bars, which he kept hidden at two different places in the hills. Some of the stone bars were thin and long, others thick and short. Then old Bo Bo Ren took the team to Son Hiep commune where they met some people who reputedly had been keeping lithophones hidden away.

Starting from Son Hiep the team crossed the Gia Dang stream and climbed rocky slopes. It was a difficult journey. The trail passed by majestic waterfalls. In several places the team had to cling to jungle vines and sharp-edged rocks to climb up mountain slopes. At Ea Kluman (Elephant's Tusk) stream, it crossed Du Pa stream and arrived in an area of abandoned hillslope fields now overgrown with jungle vegetation. After doing some excavation work, the team found eight stone bars lying around a big boulder. This was the eighth lithophone discovered in Khanh Son so far.

The eight lithophones found in Khanh Son since 1979 total 58 stone bars. Besides three odd bars have also been discovered.

TRIEU PHONG

THE SEA AND SEAMEN

For two weeks late in April 1988 an exhibition was held in Hanoi of artistic photos by Bang Sam, a Navy captain risen from the ranks.

In the 80 photos on display the author shows the sea and Navy men on their ships and on distant islands.

His camera gives nature a human soul whether it takes in cactus on Bach Long Vi island, stone flowers with birds hovering above, or "tempest trees" on Truong Sa island... There are also scenes of activity on ship deck: beads of sweat on a sailor's face, the sharp look of a radar man... Man is shown in his struggle against inclement nature.

Bang Sam is now 44. At 21 he began taking striking snapshots while serving on the Ho Chi Minh trail. At 28 he was on the staff of the Navy Command and was credited with highly interesting pictures of the destruction of mines dropped by the Americans to blockade Hai Phong harbour and other places in the Bac Bo gulf. His photos were on display at international exhibitions in the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, Mongolia, Japan and Iraq.

In 1985 Bang Sam was awarded a diploma of merit by the Soviet Interpress Photo.

NGOC LAN

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Front cover: A floating house at Thay pagoda (Ha Son Binh province) where water-puppet shows are performed on festive days.

Photo: PHAM NGOC LONG

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Renewal of Economic Management

THE FIRST LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANIES IN HAI PHONG

Set up in June 1981, the Haiphong Maritime Shipping Company had at the time only one ship, valued at 750,000 US dollars. Its business was to transport goods and act as shipping agency. Because of its modest capital it often had difficulty finding freight. However, it managed to fulfil and even overfulfil all of its planned targets. In 1987, it surpassed its inland transport targets by 11%, its foreign currency revenues by 7.66% and its budgetary remittances in Vietnamese currency by 33.3%. By May this year (1988) it has fulfilled 80% of its annual inland transport plan and 50% of its overseas transport plan.

Today it has fixed assets worth 4.61 million US dollars, a flotilla of four ships totalling 8,866 tons, a fully-equipped harbour sector with 200 metres of wharves, 3,000 square metres of warehouse floor space, 5,000 square metres of open-air depot, 4 lorries, 4 fork-lifts, and 2 cranes.

At the end of April 1988, the Company started raising capital by selling shares. With the Bus Company, it is thus one of the first two enterprises in Haiphong to use this method of fund raising.

The Company divides its capital into 4,610 shares, worth 1,000 dollars each, which it sells to State enterprises, collective enterprises, and private individuals both in the country and abroad.

The shares can be bought with foreign currencies, gold, or Vietnamese *dong*. The shareholders have equal rights and have their say in the way business is conducted at shareholders' meetings held once or twice every year. At the end of the year, the shareholders receive part of the profits earned either in foreign currencies or vouchers allowing them to buy goods at special shops in Haiphong. As the Company is member of Lloyd's, its shares are insured against losses.

Only one month after the start of the fund-raising drive, the Company had sold 642 shares: 500 to the Vietnam Foreign Trade Bank, 100 to the Vietnam Insurance Company (BAO VIET), etc.

Starting from 1 June 1988, it has been doing business under the name of Haiphong Joint-stock Maritime Shipping Company, Limited.

NGUYEN HIEU

PANORAMA ● PANORAMA

For Better Translations of Foreign Literature

Translations of foreign literary works now account for two-thirds of the total number of literary titles printed annually. This figure speaks volumes for the interest shown by Vietnamese readers in other peoples' literatures. Alas, there have appeared signs of shoddy work and an unhealthy trend toward commercialization in this field.

The problem was discussed at a symposium held at the end of April last by the Council for the Translation of Foreign Literary Works under the Vietnam Writers' Association. The symposium was attended by many well-known translators.

The papers read at the symposium assessed the role played by translation work in the country's literary life. Translations cannot be dismissed as mere appendixes, but are part and parcel of our national literature.

The quality of translation was the primary concern of many participants. There have been many failings: poor selection of works to be translated; catering to poor literary tastes, low-quality translations, which in certain cases are not faithful to the original texts. Perfunctory criticism and superficial review of translations have aggravated the situation.

The bureaucratic subsidy-based system of socio-economic management has unfavourably affected the quality of translation works. The sharing of benefits between the translators and publishers is unfair. Translators receive only about 0.9% of the product of sales while the distributing agencies reap as much as 20%. No translator can live on his translation work whatever his skills and reputation.

At the symposium, many translators voiced the hope to have frequent contacts with their colleagues and writers in the world in order to raise the quality of their work.

VAN HOA

THE FIRST VIETNAMESE DICTIONARY OF PHILOSOPHY

A Short Dictionary of Philosophy, the first ever to appear in Vietnamese, has been put out by the Publishing House of Higher and Vocational Education. This 550-page dictionary (size 13 cm × 19 cm) is a collective work of Huu Ngoc (chief editor), Duong Phu Hiep and Le Huu Tang.

The expected users of the book are the broad masses of school and college students for whom Marxist—Leninist philosophy is required reading. It is also intended for researchers in the natural and social sciences and people interested in philosophical studies.

The dictionary comprises about 1,000 entries grouped into three categories: philosophical terminology, philosophers (in a broad sense: they also include writers, historians, artists and scientists), and the classics of Marxism—Leninism.

The authors have used a wide range of reference books published inside and outside Vietnam, particularly philosophical dictionaries recently published in the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic. They also try to introduce the readers to some of the philosophical doctrines of the East which so far are little dealt with in similar works published in Europe.

The history of philosophies and ideas in Vietnam is not studied in this dictionary. The authors plan either to include it in a future re-edition of this book, or write a separate book on it.

VAN HOA

SRV FOREIGN MINISTRY'S STATEMENT OF 26 MAY 1988

1. Acting upon the agreements between the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the People's Republic of Kampuchea, Vietnam has since 1982 carried out annual partial withdrawals of its volunteer troops from Kampuchea and after six partial withdrawals, half of the Vietnamese volunteer force has been brought home. This year, the two governments have agreed on an additional withdrawal of 50,000 troops, which amounts to half of the remaining volunteer troops. The two sides have also agreed to withdraw to Vietnam the Command of the Vietnamese Volunteer Force and place the Vietnamese troops remaining in Kampuchea under the direction of the People's Republic of Kampuchea.

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the People's Republic of Kampuchea will welcome representatives of governments and international organizations and individual people interested in the Kampuchea issue who wish to come and observe the withdrawal which is to take place this year.

2. Over the past six years, although Vietnam has withdrawn half of its volunteer force, the all-round situation in Kampuchea has further stabilized, the Kampuchean People's Armed Forces have gradually grown and have shouldered ever greater responsibilities in national defence. The largest-ever withdrawal of troops to be effected by Vietnam in the latter half of 1988 once again testifies to the steady growth of the People's Republic of Kampuchea. It also is a manifestation of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam's policy of respect for the independence and sovereignty of Kampuchea and its resolve to withdraw all its volunteer force by 1990.

At the same time, it is the wish of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to achieve a political solution to the Kampuchea issue and to withdraw all its volunteer force according to a schedule to be agreed upon in a political solution to the Kampuchea issue.

3. Public opinion in Southeast Asia and the world over has warmly welcomed the People's Republic of Kampuchea's policy of peace, independence, democracy and national reconciliation and the talks between Chairman Hun Sen and Prince Sihanouk. The main obstacle to a political solution to the Kampuchea issue now is the genocidal Pol Pot clique. The Kampuchean people and the people of other countries have the legitimate right to demand an end to the provision of aid and sanctuaries to the Pol Pot clique and to all schemes aimed at imposing the genocidal Pol Pot regime on Kampuchea.

4. The Vietnamese Government fully supports the proposals of the Kampuchean Government on the establishment of a zone of peace along the Kampuchean — Thai border and the settlement of the issue of repatriating the Kampuchean refugees. In that spirit, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the People's Republic of Kampuchea have agreed that Vietnamese volunteer force in Kampuchea shall be withdrawn to thirty kilometres from the Kampuchean — Thai border.

5. Proceeding from its goodwill to achieve an early political solution to the Kampuchea issue and its desire to ensure lasting peace and stability in Southeast Asia, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam welcomes all efforts to promote talks aimed at reaching a political solution to the Kampuchea issue and establishing a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality in Southeast Asia as proposed by the ASEAN countries.

COMMUNIQUE OF THE SRV DEFENCE MINISTRY ON THE WITHDRAWAL OF VIETNAMESE VOLUNTEER TROOPS FROM KAMPUCHEA IN 1988

Acting upon the Statement of the February 1983 Summit Conference of the three countries — Kampuchea, Vietnam and Laos — and the decision taken in August 1985 by the People's Republic of Kampuchea and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on the annual troop withdrawals and the eventual total withdrawal of the Vietnamese Volunteer Force from Kampuchea by 1990;

Taking into consideration the strengthening in all fields of the People's Republic of Kampuchea, especially that of her security and defence capabilities after six partial withdrawals of Vietnamese volunteer troops from Kampuchea since 1982;

In conformity with Vietnam's consistent respect for the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and self-determination of the Kampuchean people;

The Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea have agreed:

1. To withdraw 50,000 Vietnamese volunteer troops from Kampuchea in 1988. This important partial withdrawal of Vietnamese volunteer troops from Kampuchea shall be effected during the period extending from June to December 1988, by land and water.

2. Along with this withdrawal of Vietnamese volunteer troops the Command of the Vietnamese Volunteer Force in Kampuchea shall be repatriated in 1988.

3. To place under the direction of the People's Republic of Kampuchea the remaining Vietnamese troops, who will be completely repatriated by 1990.

STATEMENT
BY KAMPUCHEAN FOREIGN MINISTRY

Following the six annual partial withdrawals of Vietnamese volunteer troops from Kampuchea beginning in 1982 the Governments of the PRK and of the SRV have agreed to effect the seventh troop withdrawal involving 50,000 men in the period extending from June to December 1988. They have also agreed to withdraw Vietnamese volunteer troops 30km from the Kampuchean-Thai frontier.

This important troop withdrawal has been decided upon in view of the firm and steady development of the PRK in all fields, notably the increasing ability of its armed forces to assume the defence of the homeland. Thanks to the devoted assistance of Vietnamese volunteer troops and the support of the Kampuchean people, the armed forces of the PRK have developed and are now capable of effectively fulfilling their duties. The Kampuchean Government and people are grateful to the Vietnamese Government and people for their solidarity and assistance and for the sacrifices they have made.

At the request of the Kampuchean people, the Vietnamese volunteer troops have come to Kampuchea to fulfil their internationalist duty while scrupulously respecting the independence and sovereignty of Kampuchea. After the withdrawal of this major part of the Vietnamese volunteer troops, the remainder will be placed by common agreement under the direction of the PRK and will be totally repatriated by 1990 and even earlier should a political solution to the Kampuchea issue be achieved.

The PRK and the SRV are always ready for a peaceful settlement of the Kampuchea issue. To this end, they have proposed the creation of a security zone along the Kampuchean-Thai frontier, the settlement of the question of Kampuchean refugees in Thailand and their eventual repatriation.

All those proposals are still valid. The decision of the PRK and the SRV to withdraw Vietnamese volunteer troops 30km from the Kampuchean-Thai border is a new proof of their goodwill and their wish to have good neighbourly relations with the Kingdom of Thailand. The PRK hopes that should Thailand be motivated by the same goodwill it would not miss this favourable opportunity to restore a frontier of peace and friendship between the two countries and begin talks on the question of organized repatriation of Kampuchean refugees in Thailand.

Encouraged by public opinion, the PRK, the SRV and the Lao People's Democratic Republic have made tireless efforts to find a political solution to the Kampuchea issue. The Ho Chi Minh City agreement of 29 July 1987 between Vietnam and Indonesia, the policy of national reconciliation proclaimed by the PRK on 27 August 1987, its declaration of 8 October 1987 on a political solution to the Kampuchea issue, and the joint communiqué of 4 December 1987 following the Hun Sen-Sihanouk meeting in France have been welcomed by world opinion as very encouraging steps towards a breakthrough.

However, there still exists a very dangerous obstacle due to the attempts to bring the Pol Pot genocidal criminals back to power and to re-impose their bloody regime on Kampuchea. To that end, these criminals continue to enjoy support and assistance from certain international reactionary circles who are interested in maintaining regional tension. It is absolutely necessary to eliminate this obstacle now that more than half of the Vietnamese volunteer troops have been withdrawn from Kampuchea. Moreover, it is necessary to haul the Pol Pot criminals before an international tribunal. At the same time, they must be denied foreign sanctuaries allowing them to continue their criminal activities and prolong their undeclared war against the PRK. This legitimate demand conforms not only to the aspiration of the Kampuchean people who feel deep hatred for the Polpotists and their associates, but also to the aspiration of an increasing number of public figures, scholars, jurists and organizations across the world. That act of justice could not be denied the Kampuchean people. The Kampuchean Government and people reiterate their deep gratitude for this international sympathy and support and their firm confidence that the international community will continue its joint efforts to prevent the return of the genocidal criminals and to ensure peace, independence and non-alignment for Kampuchea.

The Government of the PRK reaffirms its policy of national reconciliation and its stand as expounded in its Declaration of 8 October 1987 regarding a political solution in Kampuchea aimed at solving the issue by peaceful means, thus actively contributing to transforming Southeast Asia into a zone of peace, stability, friendship and cooperation and to world peace.

●

KAMPUCHEAN DEFENCE MINISTRY'S COMMUNIQUE ON THE WITHDRAWAL OF VIETNAMESE VOLUNTEER TROOPS FROM KAMPUCHEA IN 1988

In the past as well as at present, whenever Kampuchea met with difficulties and asked for help, Vietnam has always responded and has always respected the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and the right to self-determination of the Kampuchean people. And as soon as the situation in Kampuchea returned to normal, Vietnam has withdrawn its volunteer troops and brought them home.

After acting in close cooperation with the Vietnamese volunteer troops to overthrow the genocidal Pol Pot regime, the People's Republic of Kampuchea has won effective control of the whole of the country. During the past decade, the PRK has developed and firmly marched forward while gradually assuming the task of national defence, making possible six annual partial withdrawals of Vietnamese volunteer troops. The PRK highly praises and is deeply grateful to the Vietnamese volunteer troops for having successfully fulfilled their internationalist task in Kampuchea.

Acting upon the Statement of the February 1983 Summit Conference of the three countries — Kampuchea, Vietnam and Laos — and the decision by the People's Republic of Kampuchea and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on the annual troop withdrawals and the eventual total withdrawal of the Vietnamese Volunteer Force from Kampuchea by 1990;

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1. To withdraw 50,000 Vietnamese volunteer troops from Kampuchea in 1988. This important partial withdrawal of Vietnamese volunteer troops from Kampuchea shall be effected during the period extending from June to December 1988, by land and water.

2. Along with this withdrawal of Vietnamese volunteer troops the Command of the Vietnamese Volunteer Force in Kampuchea shall be repatriated in 1988.

3. To place under the direction of the People's Republic of Kampuchea the remaining Vietnamese troops, who will be completely repatriated by 1990. ●

GOODWILL IN ACTION

On 26 May last, from Hanoi and Phnom Penh, the seventh withdrawal of Vietnamese volunteer troops from Kampuchea was announced. According to the statements of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and the Ministries of Defence of Vietnam and Kampuchea, this troop withdrawal is to be effected from June till December 1988. Fifty thousand Vietnamese volunteer troops will be withdrawn from Kampuchea along with the Command of the Vietnamese Volunteer Force in Kampuchea; the remaining troops will be placed under the direction of the PRK and will be completely repatriated by 1990. Along with the troop withdrawal, Vietnam fully supports Kampuchea's proposal for the establishment of a zone of peace along the Kampuchean — Thai border and the settlement of the problem of repatriation of Kampuchean refugees.

The Vietnamese volunteer troops remaining in Kampuchea will withdraw to 30 kilometres from the Kampuchean — Thai frontier.

Since the first troop withdrawal in 1982, five more unilateral partial withdrawals of Vietnamese volunteers have been carried out without any condition being set for them. The number of troops already withdrawn accounts for half of the volunteer force. In this seventh withdrawal, 50,000 troops, i. e. half of the remainder, will be involved. Owing to the large number of troops to be pulled out of Kampuchea, this large-scale withdrawal is of special significance.

It demonstrates the vigorous growth of the Kampuchean revolution in all respects. Major problems of security and defence have been basically solved by the Phnom Penh Administration. After their resurrection from the Pol Pot genocide, the Kampuchean people, now masters of their own life, have made tremendous efforts, whose success has also been due to the disinterested assistance of Vietnam, Laos, the Soviet Union and progressive people across the world.

At present, there can be no more doubt about the People's Republic of Kampuchea's ability to control and manage the country. The PRK's policy of national reconciliation is in keeping with the aspiration of all Kampucheans both in the country and abroad. At the same time it is the wish of all countries in the region to see a political solution to the Kampuchea issue. The initial results of the Hun Sen — Sihanouk meetings have been highly appreciated by public opinion in Kampuchea and in the world.

Against such a background, the announcement of the seventh troop withdrawal has been welcomed by all countries desiring a fair solution to the Kampuchea issue. Vietnam's good will has been amply demonstrated by its repeated proposals for a political solution through dialogue, not confrontation. Naturally, there are still people who seek to distort the meaning of this action by Vietnam, claiming for instance that it is a mere troop rotation, or a propoganda stunt made in anticipation of the Soviet-American summit in Moscow and the special session of the UN General Assembly on disarmament. Other people have either expressed doubts or adopted a wait-and-see attitude.

But those people's ill will or scepticism has been proved by facts to be unjustified.

As has been its principled stand, Vietnam has always wanted to see a peaceful, independent, neutral and non-aligned Kampuchea. Vietnam welcomes any effort by any nation to push forward the process of negotiation for a political solution to the Kampuchea issue and for the establishment of a zone of peace, freedom, and neutrality in Southeast Asia as proposed by the ASEAN countries. The main obstacle to such a solution is the genocidal Pol Pot clique which has been aided and abetted by certain forces.

Following the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops, and the achievement of a political solution to the Kampuchea issue, the legitimate aspiration of the seven million people of Kampuchea must be respected; no attempt must be made to return the Polpotists to power in Kampuchea.

NGUYEN VINH

DOCUMENT

THE SIX WITHDRAWALS OF VIETNAMESE VOLUNTEER TROOPS FROM KAMPUCHEA IN 1982 – 1987

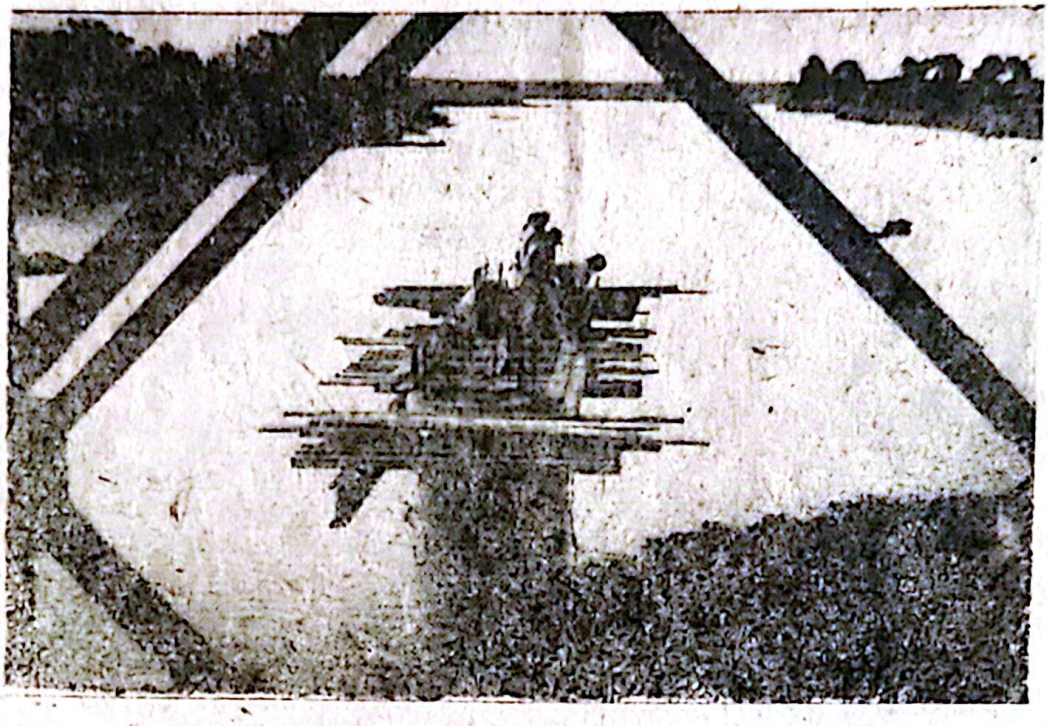
First Withdrawal: The Sixth Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Kampuchea, Laos and Vietnam, held on 6 and 7 July 1982 in Ho Chi Minh City, decided on annual partial withdrawals of Vietnamese volunteer troops from Kampuchea.

On 17 July 1982, a send-off ceremony for the first Vietnamese volunteer units to be repatriated was held in Phnom Penh.

Second Withdrawal: The Cuu Long Combat Group comprising an infantry division and six brigades and regiments left for home in May 1983.

At a press conference held on 1 May 1983 in the presence of more than 150 foreign journalists who came to observe the troop pull-out, Hun Sen, Political Bureau member of the Central Committee of the

Foreign journalists observing the sixth partial withdrawal in 1987.



Building the Stung-Slot bridge on Highway No. 4.

Photos: VU HUYEN

Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Party, Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers, and Foreign Minister, stated that the partial withdrawals of Vietnamese volunteer troops were evidence of Vietnam's wholehearted cooperation with and disinterested assistance to Kampuchea.

On the same day, a send-off ceremony was held in Phnom Penh for the departing Vietnamese volunteers.

Third Withdrawal: In June 1984, two brigades, a regiment and a number of independent battalions stationed in the northwestern border provinces of Kampuchea left for home.

On 20 June 1984, Brigade 690 pulled out of Siem Reap Oddar Meanchay province.

On 20 June 1984, Brigade 688 pulled out of Battambang province.

On 21 June 1984, Regiment 550 pulled out of Pursat province.

On 23 June 1984, an official send-off ceremony was held for them in Phnom Penh.

Fourth Withdrawal: It involved combat Group 52 stationed in the northeastern provinces of Kampuchea: Preah Vihear, Stung Treng, Rattanakiri and Mondulkiri, and Brigades 7703, 7706 and 9906 in Svay Rieng, Prey Veng and Kandal provinces.

Fifth Withdrawal: Combat Group 98 made up of the 8th Infantry Division, the 95th Infantry Brigade, the 37th Infantry Regiment and dependent units stationed in the southwestern part of Kampuchea was repatriated on 28 June 1986.

At a press conference held on the occasion of this fifth withdrawal of Vietnamese volunteer troops, Comrade Hun Sen stated that the annual partial withdrawals of Vietnamese volunteer troops and their eventual total withdrawal by the year 1990 clearly proved Kampuchea's and Vietnam's goodwill and were based on the real situation in Kampuchea. "There are now two possibilities," he said. "Either all parties concerned will agree on a political solution for the Kampuchea issue, or the situation will continue to develop as it does now. By 1990 all Vietnamese volunteer troops will have been withdrawn, and there will no longer be any so-called Kampuchea issue left."

Sixth Withdrawal: Combat Group 94 in Battambang province and Combat Group 99 in Kompong Som left for home on 29 November 1987.

At a ceremony held to grant the Angkor Order to these Combat Groups, Kampuchean Defence Minister Kol Buntha said that the splendid revolutionary heroism and lofty international proletarian spirit of the Vietnamese volunteer troops and of the Vietnamese people as a whole have set an everlasting brilliant example for the army and the people of Kampuchea.

THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT AND DISARMAMENT

Editor's Note. — A ministerial conference of the Non-aligned countries on disarmament was held in Havana on 29 and 30 May 1988. It was attended by more than one hundred delegations from member countries and national liberation movements, and by observers and guests. Forty delegations were led by foreign ministers.

Vietnamese Minister for Foreign Affairs NGUYEN CO THACH *made a speech at the session on 29 May. Following is the full text of his address. The title is ours.*

Mr. President,

The delegation of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam highly values the great efforts made by Cuba in preparing the draft documents of the Conference of the Coordinating Committee of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam approves of the documents and regards their adoption as a major contribution of the Non-Aligned Movement to the success of the Third Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Disarmament.

The documents of the Non-Aligned Movement on disarmament and the final declaration of the Special Session of the UN General Assembly in 1978 very clearly point out the nuclear danger posed to mankind and the urgent need to check it and achieve disarmament with regard to nuclear, chemical, bacteriological and other mass destruction weapons, to prevent an arms race in outer space, and to carry out a programme for total and complete disarmament in order to ensure for all nations lasting peace, security and development.

Over the past several decades, only a few positive steps have been taken, which are far from meeting the aspiration of the world's people for disarmament and for a lasting peace as a precondition for development. At the same time, there has appeared the danger of the arms race entering a new and dangerous stage due to new advances in science and technology and the intention to take the arms race into outer space.

The Non-Aligned Movement has made persevering contributions to the cause of disarmament and has actively taken part in the efforts of the United Nations for that purpose. We are resolved to persist in this important role and to contribute together with other countries and the people of the whole world to the cause of disarmament in the interest of peace and development. We welcome the positive steps achieved at the Soviet — American summits and call on the United States and the Soviet Union to cut their strategic arms by 50 per cent and take subsequent steps toward complete and total disarmament.

Mr. President,

For a long time now the erroneous idea has persisted that the biggest arms-producing countries, especially those with nuclear capabilities, are to play a decisive role in the disarmament issue. Of course, they hold the main responsibility, but the point is whether arms manufacture is the only decisive factor. Haven't arms purchases also played a no less crucial role? Obviously, there would be no point in stepping up arms production if they cannot be sold. In particular the imperialist and colonialist powers manufacture arms not for them to be used solely in their own countries but chiefly for them to be used in other countries, especially those in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Over the last forty years and more, war has not broken out among the biggest arms-manufacturing countries, the nuclear powers, and the countries having the biggest arms stockpiles. Instead, the more than 100 wars fought in the past 40 years have taken place on the territories of the Asian, African and Latin American countries which are not arms-producing countries and have neither nuclear weapons nor big arms stockpiles. Wars have been conducted by imperialist and colonialist powers against Asian, African and Latin American countries. The peoples of the world and more particularly of Asia, Africa and Latin America have been the main victims of the arms race in the world. Imperialist and colonialist circles have netted colossal profits from the arms race and have used weapons to serve their big-stick policy aimed at maintaining their exploitation and domination

of countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. As the main places where weapons from arms-producing countries are used, the main victims of the arms race, and the theatres of local wars over the past forty years, the countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America have the most vital interests and full sovereign powers in the struggle against the arms race and against the use of force in international relations. During the past four decades, the struggle of the Asian, African and Latin American countries for national independence and non-alignment has been of decisive importance in bringing about the collapse of colonialism, and in thwarting the strategy of drawing Asian, African and Latin American countries into aggressive military alliances, and has in fact caused the disintegration of the Baghdad and SEATO military alliances. Many nations in Asia, Africa and Latin America have made decisive contributions to the defeat of the aggressive policies against their independence, most notably in the Korea war, the Indochina war, the Algeria war, the Vietnam war, the invasion of the Bay of Pigs, the Portuguese war against the peoples of Angola and Mozambique... In Asia, Africa and Latin America agreements have been signed and demands have been made for the establishment of nuclear-free zones, such as the Treaty of Tlatelolco in Latin America and the Rarotonga Treaty in the South Pacific. The Organisation for African Unity has decided to make Africa nuclear free and many countries have urged the establishment of nuclear-free zones in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, the Korean peninsula, etc.

Some areas and some countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America have banned the introduction of nuclear weapons into their territories. There have also been proposals for the establishment of peace zones in Asia, Africa and Latin America, such as those for a peaceful, free and neutral zone in Southeast Asia, a cooperative zone in South Asia, a peaceful zone in the Indian Ocean, etc. More and more countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America have demanded an end to the presence of foreign troops and military bases on their territories.

Resolutions of the Non-Aligned Movement have played no small part in the peaceful settlement of conflicts and disputes in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The Organisation for African Unity has made notable efforts to solve differences among Arab countries peacefully. The Contadora group has made active contributions to the peaceful settlement of crises in Central America caused by outside interference. In Southeast Asia, the Non-Aligned Movement has adopted resolutions to help achieve a peaceful solution to the Kampuchea issue. Since the end of 1987 there have been many positive developments in line with the resolutions of the 6th, 7th and 8th summit conferences of the Non-Aligned Movement regarding Southeast Asia, including the Kampuchea issue. Recent resolutions of the Non-Aligned Movement have called on all parties concerned in Southeast Asia to hold talks to solve the Kampuchea issue peacefully and without outside interference. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has proposed that Korea be peacefully reunified on the basis of the withdrawal of foreign troops from Korea.

Facts over the past decades show that although the non-aligned countries do not produce arms and possess neither nuclear weapons nor huge arms stockpiles, they are the main places where arms are used, the main victims of the arms race in the world, and the main victims of local wars over the past 40 years. We have the most vital interests and full powers in the effort to transform Asia, Africa and Latin America into areas without arms race, without military alliances, without foreign military bases and troops, without nuclear, bacteriological and chemical weapons; to ban all transit of nuclear weapons through our territories and to establish zones of peace and cooperation where force shall not be used to settle disputes and differences. This is a difficult and long-term task which, however, lies in our hands, not in those of the arms-selling imperialist and colonialist powers. We can achieve this goal step by step and this will be an inestimable contribution to the cause of disarmament and world peace

In a word, the Non-Aligned Movement will actively take part in the common endeavour of all nations for disarmament within the framework of the United Nations; at the same time we have the most vital interests and full powers in the effort to turn the countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America into a zone without arms race, without nuclear weapons, a zone of peace from which the use of force in international relations is banned.

Thank you, Mr. President ●

AN END TO THE ARMS RACE AND TOTAL ELIMINATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Editor's Note: Again, the demand for peace is mounting throughout the world. « Peace Wave 88 », as this sweeping mass movement is called, is putting pressure on the special session on disarmament of the UN General Assembly (31 May to 25 June 1988), urging it to achieve positive and concrete results.

At this session on 6 June 1988, SRV Minister for Foreign Affairs NGUYEN CO THACH delivered an important speech. We publish below some excerpts and its final part in full. The title is ours.

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Opening his speech, Minister for Foreign Affairs Nguyen Co Thach made an analysis of the international background to this special session. « The favourable conditions created by the Soviet — American Summit in Moscow », he said, « have opened a new chapter in the history of international relations in general and disarmament in particular. » However, he continued, the development of the world situation still causes concern as « we are also threatened by plans for a new stage in the arms race. »

The Minister then pointed out that « the past 40 years have witnessed no wars between countries which are the largest arms producers and possess the biggest arsenals, while more than 100 local wars have been waged by several nuclear powers on the territories of Asian, African and Latin American countries. »

He concluded:

If all non-nuclear countries in the world should establish nuclear-weapon-free zones, refrain from the use of force in international relations and tolerate no presence of foreign military troops and bases, that would be a significant contribution on their part to general and complete disarmament in the world. Such undertaking would fully meet the vital interests of all non-nuclear countries and it rests altogether with them.

The time has come for us to demand legitimately that the five nuclear powers sign with all non-nuclear states multi or bilateral treaties on the non-use of force in their relations and on the peaceful settlement of disputes. The five nuclear powers should in these treaties commit themselves not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear countries.

In the course of the past 40 years the peoples of the world have been able to avoid a new world war and to safeguard world peace over the longest period in this century. In Southeast Asia however the peoples of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea have been the only victims of successive protracted wars during which was used the largest amount of bombs and ammunition ever in human history. More than anyone else we long for peace so as to rehabilitate our ravaged economy. We support the ASEAN states' initiatives with a view to setting up a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality in Southeast Asia and making it a nuclear-weapon-free zone. We welcome the drafting by the ASEAN states of an instrument on a nuclear-free Southeast Asia.

We wish for a speedy political solution to the Kampuchea question on the basis of respect for the Kampuchean people's right to self-determination, termination of all foreign interference and definitive prevention of any possible return of the genocidal and war-mongering Polpot regime. Annual withdrawals of Vietnamese forces from Kampuchea have been effected, half of these forces having been pulled out between 1982 and the end of 1987. This year Vietnam will withdraw half of her remaining forces and by 1990 will have withdrawn the totality of them. If a political solution on Kampuchea can be achieved, Vietnamese forces will withdraw totally from Kampuchea in accordance with the provisions of the agreement signed.

The present contention over the archipelagoes in Southeast Asia poses a threat to peace and security in the region. On several occasions, Vietnam has proposed that the countries concerned settle their differences over the archipelagoes by way of negotiations and that, pending such a settlement, they refrain from the use of force and from any action that may aggravate the tension.

Since late 1987 several developments have taken place in line with dialogue for the settlement of problems among Southeast Asian countries: The Ho Chi Minh City agreement between Indonesia and Vietnam in July 1987 and the talks between Chairman Hun Sen and Prince Sihanouk in Paris. Vietnam has repeatedly proposed the holding of talks with China with a view to solving any difference between them and to normalising their relations in the interest of both countries and of peace in Southeast Asia.

Nuclear weapons threaten humankind with extermination. Mankind's will to survival has succeeded in eliminating intermediate range missiles and will be able to eliminate the whole of the nuclear arsenal. Mankind is certain to firmly safeguard peace.

of the world at present, the projected canonization of Vietnamese martyrs may easily turn into something not quite normal, and will cause great harm to both the Catholic and non-Catholic parts of the nation.

After the reunification of the country, the Episcopal Council launched the motto: "To live evangelically in the bosom of the nation", emphasizing the idea that the Church and the Catholic community are a component part of the Vietnamese national community. Therefore, the projected canonization cannot fail to take into account the common interest of the country and the nation.

At present, our country is facing many difficulties; its external enemies are striving to encircle and isolate it and are using every opportunity to attack it. Of course, the death of martyrs in the 18th and 19th centuries cannot in any way be blamed on the present Vietnamese Government. But this canonization of 117 martyrs will make Vietnam a State with the sixth highest number of martyr Saints in the world and will surely be used by our enemies and other hostile elements to distort and slander the religious policy of our State, and to damage both our national unity and our relations with other countries in the world community.

In this spirit, I sincerely hope that the Episcopal Council and the responsible people in the Church, together with all Catholic believers, will take effective steps to prevent the projected canonization from harming the interests of our country and our nation, and turn it into a genuinely normal religious event which will bring real glory to the Church and the believers.

11 March 1988

(Speech delivered at a meeting held by the Hanoi Committee of the Vietnam Fatherland Front to make known the viewpoint of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on the projected canonization).

Catholic priest FRANCIS HO DUC HOAN, Quynh Yen parish, Nghe An province

... In my opinion, people who die for saintly causes are saints whether they are canonized or not, i.e. their sainthood doesn't wholly depend on the decision of canonizing them and on the ceremony of their canonization. "Good wine needs no bush", the proverb says. Fame spreads without need for rituals.

The canonization of dead people aims at setting good examples for the living. Canonization of "martyrs" encourages living people to follow the example of their martyrdom. So in the case of the 117 martyrs in Vietnam (including the 21 foreigners) a point to be made clear is: how and in what circumstances did they suffer martyrdom? This problem must draw great attention from us. A question to be asked is: Why didn't the ancient feudal dynasties persecute Buddhism, which came from India, as they did Catholicism? Pondering over this question one may think that not all the 117 Blessed martyrs in Vietnam were true martyrs who served God and mankind.

I also think that the Episcopal Council of Vietnam ought to have a say in this matter, because who will be canonized? Vietnamese martyrs. The Circular of the Vietnamese Episcopal Council in 1980 has led the Church onto the same road on which all the nation is travelling. How can canonization run counter to the 1980 Circular? On the other hand one cannot reject the canonization because that would mean to refuse to recognize the Vatican. In my opinion, the best solution is to postpone the ceremony of canonization. Who has the right to decide? It is the Vietnamese Church. This question concerns not only the conscience and feelings of Vietnamese Catholics as citizens, but also their responsibility as Catholics. I definitely think that the Vietnamese Episcopal Council must take the matter in hand.

Hanoi,
April 1988

Catholic priest THIEN CAM of the Dominican order, Ho Chi Minh City

Since the Circular of the Episcopal Council of Vietnam in 1980, mottoes such as "travelling together", "living according to the Gospel amid the nation" are often recalled here and there, on this or that occasion, and they are said to be evidence that all is well with Catholics and non-Catholics alike, and that the Vietnamese Church has created for itself a worthy position and has worked out a new direction for advance.

So, according to those documents and mottoes, the Vietnamese Church of the 80's is quite different from what it was in the 50's and following years.

But documents in some cases have not reflected realities. The question is whether or not we have acted upon what we have written and said. In the minds of some people, travelling together doesn't imply "sharing the same spirit" and "living according to the Gospel amid the nation" doesn't imply that their hearts are where they live!

The canonization affair gives us a chance to think over this important problem, as it is not only an internal affair of the Church. If it were an internal problem of the Church, as many people have affirmed it to be, there wouldn't be any reason for the Government to involve itself in this affair at a time when the country is facing urgent problems in the economy and the defence of national territorial integrity.

The dossier made public by the Solidarity Committee of Vietnamese Patriotic Catholics and documents and newspapers from abroad clearly show that the projected canonization is a religious event which has been exploited right from the beginning by people who aim at creating troubles for the country, smearing the socialist republic, and increasing tension in relations between the Church and the State of Vietnam.

[...]

I sympathize with the sufferings of the refugees, who now have no homeland. But I don't agree with them when they say that "they were not allowed to live in their homeland" in the sense that they were "compelled to leave" or were "driven out" of their homeland. They themselves left the country deliberately. Nobody expelled them. An ex-president, Mr. Duong Van Minh, left the country of his own free will and nobody forced him to go abroad. An ex-vice president, Mr. Tran Van Huong, chose to stay, later died peacefully in his homeland. Before his death, he didn't meet with any trouble.

I don't criticise the anti-communist attitude of a number of Catholic refugees. They are free to be, or not to be, against communism, as they wish. Although I don't agree with their anti-communism, I don't oppose their opinion. But I can't accept the fact that they regard themselves as the only representatives of the Vietnamese Church in order unilaterally to politicize this glorious and historic event of the Vietnamese Church.

The Vietnamese Church alone, the community of Catholics living on this land where the martyrs shed their blood and died, where we are nowadays travelling together with the whole nation, and are "living according to the Gospel amid the nation", working in physical and spiritual union with the entire people to heal the wounds of the colonial period, of the anti-French and anti-US wars of resistance and striving to dispel all hatred so that no more blood is shed on this land like that shed by the martyrs.

Those who seek to draw profit from the blood of the martyrs to oppose others, and to cause division and hatred are not worthy of being Christians, for only those who stand for reconciliation and peace can be considered God's children.

Ho Chi Minh City
9 March 1988

Catholic bishop JOSEPH DINH BINH, Thai Binh diocese, Thai Binh province

Through our meetings and consultations with leaders of the Central Commission for Mass Work and the State Commission for Religious Affairs, we have realized the following: the Government shares our opinion that canonization is a normal affair of the Catholic Church. If the process of canonization had gone on normally as in other countries, the Vietnamese Government would certainly not interfere with the canonization by the Vatican of deserving people, including the 117 martyrs in Vietnam. While the Vietnamese Government doesn't ban the canonization by the Vatican of martyrs in Vietnam, it disapproves of the decision of the Vatican to canonize Vietnamese martyrs without consulting it beforehand. That means there are unusual points in the canonization of the 117 martyrs in Vietnam, which cause the Government to be concerned.

As we all know very well, the Evangelization of Vietnam coincided with aggression by the colonialists many years ago. Concerning the present canonization there are wicked political schemes which may cause people with inadequate understanding of religion and of the situation of the Vietnamese Church since the total liberation of South Vietnam, to hold wrong views about religion, thus damaging national unity. Today, in national construction and defence we must first and foremost build up a solid national unity so as to accomplish our historical mission.

For this reason, the communique of the Episcopal Council of Vietnam at this time earnestly calls upon God's people in Vietnam to try their best to maintain the unity of all social classes following God's spirit of love, as well as the national tradition of fraternal affection and assistance throughout the history of the Vietnamese people's national construction and defence.

Thai Binh
April 1988

Catholic bishop JOHN BAPTIST BUI TUAN, Long Xuyen diocese, An Giang province

Canonization is a delicate problem affecting both Catholics and non-Catholics in Vietnam. Yet the Vietnamese Government was not informed beforehand. This will raise obstacles to the Vatican's attempt to develop better relations with Vietnam.

In my opinion, in this affair, in order to reduce to a minimum the unfavourable factors, and at the same time increase the favourable ones, we should adopt the following attitude:

We shall continue to honour the Vietnamese Saints and the best way to do so is to faithfully follow the spirit of the Gospel, i.e. to love God and love people, to practise equality and fraternity, to obey the spirit of communion with the Successor of Saint Peter and the Holy Church. Unnecessary formalist rituals should be abolished. Past conflicts should not be revived. Let's concentrate our best efforts on urgent affairs such as the improvement of living standards, national construction and defence, and living according to the Gospel amid the nation. Facing divisive and provocative schemes from any quarters and especially from foreign radio stations, we should frustrate them.

I'm sure that all priests and believers in the diocese will sincerely share my views.

Long Xuyen
2 December 1987

Catholic priest BAO TINH VUONG DINH BICH, Superior of Convent of St Mary's Poor Brotherhood, district 3, Ho Chi Minh City

... I don't mean that it isn't time for posing the problem of canonization. But it is imperative to discuss the problem beforehand taking into account the time factor, even be-

fore the matter was envisaged. The problem involves several complicated and delicate historical issues, and it is to be supposed that Church leaders in Hanoi and in the Vatican should fully realise them, and pay great attention to the feeling of God's people in general and the Vietnamese people in particular.

The Vietnamese Government allows visits to Vietnam by Western delegations including press correspondents and Catholic priests. They may go to any diocese in the country when major festivals and religious activities are held. So much the better for the foreign affairs of the State, although, there is the possibility that the facts may be deliberately distorted. If the canonization had been arranged after public discussions and consultations outside and inside the Vietnamese Church, problems would have been clarified and resolved, doubts would have been dispelled so that the Saints' figure could be presented in a truthful way. Then the people would have shown them great respect and be proud of them. Then a great festival would been held by all Christians all over the country as well as in Rome. Our non-Catholic brothers would have shared in our joy, just as at Christmas and Easter. This would have benefited our State's foreign policy, especially vis-à-vis the capitalist countries with which we would like to have better economic relations.

It is obvious that we could have turned the event into a mass festival for our entire people. It is well known that there have been festivals on the occasion of canonizations in South Korea and Japan... The Christians there were happy and cheerful as the ceremonies had been carefully prepared according to national traditions and had taken place at favourable times.

I can't help feeling upset and worried at the prospect of the canonization ceremony being carelessly carried out by only Vietnamese *émigrés* and refugees. This will cause non-Catholics in Vietnam to be prejudiced against Catholics, while the latter will resent the fact that the ceremony is being « organized without them » and that they cannot go to Rome to celebrate. Those people who are striving to urge Catholics everywhere in the country to « live evangelically in the bosom of the nation » will feel frustrated, while *émigrés* and refugees will honour the saintly martyrs on the « Day of the Republican (Saigon) Armed Forces ».

Ho Chi Minh City
April 1988

Catholic priest Peter NGUYEN VAN CHAU, Vinh Son parish, Ho Chi Minh City

... First of all, concerning the procedure of canonization, Cardinal Trinh Van Can on 16 November 1985 sent a demand for the canonization of 117 Blessed martyrs in Vietnam, and on 18 April 1986, the Congregation of Canonization issued documents satisfying this demand. This started the canonization process. On 22 June 1987, Pope John Paul II after consulting the Consistory decided that 117 Blessed martyrs in Vietnam were to be made officially recognized Saints.

Some people have said that this canonization had been decided upon prior to the liberation of South Vietnam, and that what is being done now is only the continuation of an already-started procedure, with all preparations completed. But what was done years ago could only be the expression of the wishes of believers. The process really started only when documents were issued by the Congregation of Canonization. There had been none before dealing with the canonization of Vietnamese martyrs. Canonization is quite different from beatification. Beatification is only the first step, or a provisional step. Beatification may lead to canonization or may remain just that, or may be cancelled. But canonization is a definitive step and holds good for ever. That's why the process of canonization must be more carefully and more cautiously conducted than that of beatification. And yet, the process of canonization of the 117 Blessed martyrs in Vietnam this time has gone on extremely rapidly, without any on-the-spot investigation and consultation. At least, Vietnamese documents have not been used. Nguyen dynasties documents may not always reflect the truth concerning some Blessed martyrs. But it is obviously a great shortcoming to have neglected them when arranging the dossiers of the 117 Blessed martyrs in Vietnam. In normal cases, it is possible to invoke faulty evidence or testimony to get the case reviewed. Did the Consistory, when studying the dossiers of the canonization of 117 Blessed martyrs in Vietnam, notice the absence of Vietnamese documents? Did anybody lodge a protest with the Holy See? It seems that no devil's advocate was present.

Regarding the choice of a date for the canonization, there have been no consultations, no discussions, with the Vietnamese Church, the Vietnamese Government, and a date was fixed which could never be accepted by the sovereign independent State of Vietnam and by the Church of Vietnam which is very closely attached to the nation, that is the date of 19 June — the Day of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Vietnam (i.e. the Saigon regime).

It has been said that this is unintentional coincidence. But if there had been consultations with God's people in Vietnam, if there had been discussions with the Vietnamese Government, the coincidence would never have occurred. The coincidence might have been unintentional subjectively, but it is unacceptable objectively. It would have been better to discuss and fix the most suitable day for the canonization so that the event will serve the interest of the Vietnamese Church.

Ho Chi Minh City
April 1988.

THE SOVIET–US MOSCOW SUMMIT

NEW STEPS TOWARD DETENTE

A new Soviet — US summit took place in Moscow, from 29 May to 2 June 1988, the fourth between CPSU General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev and US President Ronald Reagan. It followed their meetings at Geneva (Nov. 1985), Reykjavik (Oct. 1986) and Washington (Dec. 1987). At those previous meetings, the Soviet Union and the United States had made some progress on a series of major questions concerning their bilateral relations and international issues. Understandably, the new meeting, like the previous ones, drew keen interest across the world. It discussed four major issues: disarmament, regional conflicts, Soviet-US bilateral relations, and human rights.

After four rounds of talks held in a businesslike and frank atmosphere between the two leaders, between their aides, and between ranking experts of the two countries, the two sides were able to take note of positive results which promised to further Soviet-American relations and contribute significantly to the improvement of international relations in the direction of lasting peace and security.

Among the questions discussed, disarmament remained the focus of world attention, particularly the steps taken toward the reduction by half of strategic offensive weapons on either side. The two sides exchanged the instruments of ratification of the treaty on intermediate — and shorter-range missiles (INF), signed a treaty on the joint conduct of experiments aimed at the verification of compliance with the 1974 treaty on the limitation of underground nuclear tests and an agreement on mutual notification of the launching of inter-continental ballistic missiles and submarine-based ballistic missiles. There was also a noticeable drawing closer together of the two sides' positions regarding the verification of the ban on chemical weapons and the conduct of this verification with regard to private enterprises and multinational firms, on the reduction of conventional forces and weapons, etc.

A series of agreements were signed in the domain of Soviet-American economic and technological cooperation, viz. the agreement on the setting up of the joint telecommunications systems "Tchaika" and "Loran S", joint rescue operations on the sea, cooperation in the domain of transport science and technology; an agreement on fishing rights, etc.

The important successes of the Moscow summit confirm the trend toward Soviet-American dialogue in all fields in the interest of both countries and in conformity with the aspiration of the people across the world.

The Moscow summit was neither an opening nor a conclusion, but the continuation of a process, that of moving toward complete and total disarmament, first of all nuclear disarmament; of continued improvement of Soviet-American relations, positive contribution to international detente, resolution of burning regional issues, and moving toward a world without nuclear weapons, without war, a world in which every nation and every human being can live in peace, freedom and happiness.

However, many questions remain to be solved and major obstacles to be removed on the road toward these lofty goals. The United States has shown that it is not yet prepared to reach a final agreement on a 50% reduction of strategic offensive weapons (START). Moreover, Mr. Reagan still persists in his SDI (Star Wars) programme. The inconsistency of the American position is manifest: while professing a desire for peace and security, Mr. Reagan clings to his strategy of negotiating from a position of strength.

On the human rights issue, the American side still refused to perceive social realities in the Soviet Union and harped on old clichés in an attempt to use the issue of human rights to interfere in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union.

In bilateral issues, the United States, while declaring its agreement with the Soviet Union concerning balanced interests, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, and non-damage to each other's friendships and alliances, still put up barriers which hamper sound economic cooperation between the two countries.

Of course, one could not expect a meeting lasting only a few days to solve all important issues bearing on the basic interests of two major powers belonging to two opposing political, social and economic systems, and on the destiny of the whole of mankind. What is needed is an even more realistic approach to the problems to be debated. What is causing public concern throughout the world is not whether the remaining differences can be surmounted. Rather, it is the fact that there still remain hotheads in the United States and other Western countries who are seeking to wreck the process toward disarmament and improvement of Soviet — American relations.

That is why, in order for the agreements signed to be effectively implemented, each side has to

heighten its sense of responsibility to its people and to the cause of world peace and security. People of all lands have the right to expect the United States, whoever its future leader, to seriously fulfil the obligations it undertook at the Moscow summit.

The Moscow summit once again highlights the new requirements of the time and the possibility for the effective accommodation of two major powers to each other in order for them together to strive for their own interests and for world peace and security. The summit has breathed hope and optimism into international life at a time when mankind is moving toward the third millennium. Together with the rest of the world, the Vietnamese people rejoice over its success and believe that the results it achieved will give new momentum to the common effort to build a peaceful, stable and cooperative world.

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TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF ACTIVITY OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY

The coming into being of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on 25 May 1963 was a significant political event not only on that continent but also in the international arena. Starting with a membership of 30, OAU has now been joined by 51 countries and movements.

The objectives of the organization, as defined right at the beginning, have been confirmed at 23 successive summit conferences: to struggle against imperialism, colonialism, racism, for independence, freedom, peace, and the development of the African peoples.

To mark the growth of OAU, its 24th summit was convened in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) on 25 May 1988 to discuss urgent problems facing Africa and work out measures to improve the economic situation in various countries in the region.

During its 25 years of activity, in spite of difficulties and trials, the members of OAU have consistently spoken with one voice on burning problems of the African continent. They have resolutely supported the just struggles of the peoples in former Portuguese Africa, of those in southern Africa, a just settlement of the issues of Western Sahara and the Middle East, and the struggle of the South African people against apartheid. OAU has mediated the settlement of border disputes and armed conflicts between countries in the region; sent its own force to replace the British interventionists in Tanganyika, and a peace-keeping force to help resolve the conflict between Libya and Chad.

Accounting for nearly one-third of UN membership and half of the non-aligned countries, OAU has always used its forums to condemn imperialism, and demand the establishment of a new international economic order. Between OAU member countries there have emerged ever more vigorous South-South cooperation relations. The success of the 8th summit conference of the Non-Aligned Movement in Harare (August 1986) and the election of Zimbabwe as president of the movement are further evidence of the great contributions of OAU and its growing prestige among the developing countries.

For a quarter-century, the African peoples have had to concentrate on struggling against remnants of old colonialism, the exploitation schemes of neo-colonialism, and natural calamities such as drought and the expansion of desert soil. Many countries have made praiseworthy efforts to reduce their foreign debts and ward off famine. At present, the struggle of the African peoples for independence and freedom, against backwardness and poverty, is closely linked with that for peace and against the nuclear arms race, particularly the development of nuclear weapons in South Africa. Recent events have shown that more than ever among the African countries there has developed a trend toward dialogue and negotiation in which account is taken of the interests of all parties. This trend corresponds to the prime objectives of the African peoples, i.e. independence, peace and development, and is approved of by the whole world.

As a close comrade-in-arms of the African peoples, the Vietnamese people greatly rejoice at the firm unity and the growing strength of the OAU. The close relationship between the Vietnamese and African peoples dates back a long time. Early in this century, the late President Ho Chi Minh of Vietnam travelled in Africa and established contact with many African revolutionaries. The success of the Vietnamese people's two resistance wars was closely related to the success of the revolution in many African countries. So far 41 African countries have established official diplomatic relations with Vietnam. Many high-ranking Party and State delegations of Vietnam and Africa have exchanged visits.

In recent years, organizations and individuals, especially experts in various fields, from African countries and from Vietnam, have visited and worked in each other's countries and have exchanged experience, thus developing ever closer friendly relations and opening up fine prospects for mutually beneficial cooperation.

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International seminar Brisbane II:

THE SEARCH FOR A COMMON DENOMINATOR

VU CAN

From Hanoi, Vientiane or Phnom Penh, a direct flight to Brisbane, the capital of Queensland and the third largest city in Australia (population 1.2 million) would take a mere seven hours. This port city, which is both an industrial and a tourist centre, has so far been little known to us although the International Exhibition '88 organized on the occasion of Australia's bicentenary attracted large numbers of visitors from all continents. For us the country that is the home of the kangaroo and the emu and lies in the midst of Oceania was a very distant land and a world full of mystery. In the space age, we are neighbours.

With an area of 7,700,000 square kilometres, Australia ranks fifth in size in the world, after the Soviet Union, China, Canada and the United States. But its population is only 17 million so far, a small body in an oversized suit, in the words of a geographer. Over the recent years, however, the population has been increasing at an unprecedented rate thanks to the relinquishing of an antiquated immigration policy which discriminated against coloured immigrants. At present, the Vietnamese community alone numbers 120,000. Under the Conservative Administration, Australia was dragged into the US war of aggression in Vietnam. The Labour Government brought the Australian troops home. Under Prime Minister Bob Hawke, this Government has actively contributed to reducing tension in this part of the world, has shown sympathy to countries struggling for their national independence, and has followed a foreign policy which has drawn ever closer to the Non-aligned Movement. Starting from an agricultural economy, Australia has become a developed industrialized country. A power of medium stature, it is striving to open a road to external development worthy of its new position, in order to create for itself a springboard into the 21st century, which is expected to usher in the Pacific era.

Under the Sign of Goodwill and Realism

After the Vietnam war, Australia has gradually strengthened its relationships with the countries on the Indochinese peninsula. With regard to the Kampuchean problem, in spite of Western constraints, it has displayed goodwill and realism. In 1981, two years after London, Canberra withdrew recognition from "Democratic Kampuchea". Although it has not recognized the Government in Phnom Penh, it has not attacked it in a crude way and has shown a certain readiness to investigate facts and listen to arguments. From Canberra, many public figures have raised their voices to demand that an international tribunal be set up to try the Pol Pot-led criminals guilty of genocide in Kampuchea.

Against this backdrop, Griffith University has convened a series of three seminars on Indochina in Brisbane, under the sponsorship of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs, all focused on the Kampuchean problem. Seminar I, which lasted from 30 June to 2 July, 1986, and was attended mostly by people who shared the viewpoint of ASEAN and came from seven countries: Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia, the United States, and Japan, in addition to the host country. Seminar II, from 17 to 22 May, 1988, was a forum for voices that were closer to the views of Phnom Penh and Hanoi. Its participants hailed from eight countries: Australia, New Zealand, India, France, the Soviet Union, Laos, Vietnam and the People's Republic of Kampuchea. Seminar III is expected to be a forum where people on both sides will discuss the issue, compare notes, and perhaps find a common denominator. Although participants have been invited in their private capacities to voice their personal views, it has been hoped that the trial balloons will supply more data to the parties concerned and help them arrive at a solution acceptable to all.

As is known to everyone (even to those who persists in ignoring the facts), the Kampuchean problem has been blown up out of all proportion to what it was originally by dark forces in Asia and in the world. A Western scholar at Brisbane Seminar II said: « This conflict was in fact a pretext to add some flames to East-West tension at a

time when there was already Iran, Angola and the beginning of the Afghan affair. It was also an opportunity to prevent Vietnam's opening to the West at the moment when Vietnam had just been admitted to the UN. It was also to give China a better image when the Carter-Brzezinski team was looking for a Washington-Peking coalition."

That is why to discuss the Kampuchean problem as it is being posed at present is to debate an artificial issue in which artificial elements have been blown up in order to hide real facts and divert public attention. Forces hostile to the People's Republic of Kampuchea, which is the authentic representative of the Kampuchean people and has held control over the whole territory of Kampuchea for nearly ten years, have sought to lower its prestige and even deny its existence. Turning a blind eye to historical facts, they have persisted in denouncing Vietnam as an aggressor and an occupier. It is to be regretted that their arbitrary condemnation was repeated by some participants in Brisbane Seminar I. At any rate, at that time the trend toward dialogue had barely taken shape and was not yet strong enough to drive back the tendency toward confrontation, and many people were still stubbornly clinging to an antiquated philosophical approach to international disputes. At present, those forces bent upon strangling the People's Republic of Kampuchea have realized the limits of their power while the latter has grown more confident of the justice of its cause and its developing strength, and has proclaimed a policy of national reconciliation and taken the initiative in preparing the way for dialogue. The two Hun-Sen — Norodom Sihanouk meetings in Paris in late 1987 and early 1988, although still failing to create a turning-point, have been hailed by broad-ranging public opinion as carrying a great deal of significance.

Seminar II at Brisbane was attended by 30 participants — including scholars, academics, publicists and diplomats. A constructive atmosphere prevailed at the debates and the participants had the comfortable feeling that their views were being listened to and were reflected in the main in the conclusions reached by working groups and plenary sessions. This does not mean that the same views were held on key points. But the major differences were thrashed out and a patient search conducted for a common denominator. Another salient feature of the seminar was the fact that no remark inspired by ill will was voiced concerning those parties concerned that were absent.

Some Key Points of the Issue

Seminar II paid particular attention to the opinions expressed by three Kampuchean participants from Phnom Penh — a professor of sociology, a publicist and a diplomat. All three were survivors of the Khmer Rouge nightmare which had lasted three years, eight months and twenty days. They held that the Kampuchean problem is first and foremost an internal affair of Kampuchea, which must be settled by the Kampuchean parties themselves without outside interference, on the basis of self-determination and democracy and with international guarantee. In the present world context, the best solution to the problem is to eliminate the danger of a Khmer Rouge comeback to power, concurrently with the total withdrawal of Vietnamese volunteer force from Kampuchea, so as to build a peaceful, independent, democratic, neutral and non-aligned Kampuchea, and open the door wide to international cooperation from all sides. The elimination of the Khmer Rouge as a military organization is a necessity if security and stability are to be ensured for the new order arising after the conflict. This does not mean, however, to deny all existence to the Khmer Rouge as a political organization after the elimination of the genocidal ringleaders, in the new context of a pluralist regime. Needless to say that the views of the Kampuchean scholars were widely approved of.

The role to be played by Prince Sihanouk was one of the points which were hotly debated. Some people gave him an absolute place, nearly regarding him as the very embodiment of the Kampuchean nation. This view obviously lacked objectivity: the prince has been living abroad as an émigré for nearly twenty years now and, because he is backed by no solid force, has displayed a wobbly stand which has appeared to be inspired now by caprice now by arrogance. Now fairly advanced in years, he is seeking to create a niche for his son, Prince Norodom Ranarith. Of course, his concern is not wholly personal and those who know him think that he is a genuine patriot. To be fair, let us recognize that at one time he had a certain aura but that aura was unduly enlarged before sinking into oblivion. Indeed, in his own country, those among his admirers who survived the genocide are now already fairly advanced in years while the mention of his son leaves people completely indifferent. The mass of the people blame him for his alliance with the Khmer Rouge, who were guilty of towering crimes against his country and his people, murdered some of his children and many other members of the royal family, took him into custody and are now ready, in his own words, to "spit him out like the stone of a cherry". True, the prince can play a role in an eventual solution to the Kampuchean problem, but he can play this role only if he leans on the Kampuchean people for support, and Pol Pot certainly does not represent the Kampuchean people. Only cooperation between him and the People's Republic of Kam-

puchea can be a fundamental factor, a kernel around which all parties in the country will rally in order to achieve reconciliation and national concord.

Under the terms of agreements between the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the People's Republic of Kampuchea the total withdrawal of Vietnamese volunteer troops will be completed by late 1990. What would be the situation then if the Khmer Rouge had not been neutralized by that date and were again casting their shadow on Kampuchean life? All participants to the seminar expressed their concern about this point and whether they said so explicitly or not, thought that the party holding the haft of the dagger was Beijing, not Hanoi. Those who know about rural banditry in Kampuchea in the days of the Sihanouk Administration as well as in French colonial times can easily picture to themselves how, in the geographical and social context of the country, the Khmer Rouge could at the very least cause serious and protracted instability to the new social order so long as their leaders have the least cause for dissatisfaction. One cannot totally dismiss the possibility of a new tragedy happening, which would weigh heavilly on the conscience of the international community. For this reason there was a meeting of minds on the following: an international tribunal should be set up as has been suggested by Australia, and the main genocidal criminals brought to trial, so as to prevent them from turning their fascist political-military organization into a tool serving evil schemes of external forces. Then there would be cracks developing in Khmer Rouge ranks; a process of polarization would take place, and people with a certain sense of ethics left would be able to take their distance from criminal elements. Acting in this spirit, the pressure of world opinion could help bring about a breakthrough in the negotiation leading to a solution that would, in a favourite Chinese expression, "conform to both reason and sentiment". On the other hand, conditions would be created for a renewal of the Khmer Rouge, which would undergo a changeover from a subversive to a constructive force and play a worthy role in Kampuchean society now freed of conflict.

Besides its national aspect, the Kampuchean problem must be viewed from an international angle, which assumes extreme importance. In this respect, an optimum solution should guarantee the legitimate interests of all countries concerned, first of all Kampuchea's close neighbours such as Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, China... Other countries are expected to contribute to a solution by bringing their influence to bear on the issue: the Soviet Union and Great Britain were co-chairmen of previous Geneva conferences on Indochina; France and India have close relationships in many fields with the Indochinese peoples; the ASEAN countries, represented by Indonesia in the dialogue with Vietnam; the United States and Japan, in their capacity as major economic powers with important interests in the region; all the new friends of Kampuchea, Laos and Vietnam, who for many years now have shown well-meaning concern about the dispute, such as Australia, Sweden and others. The non-aligned movement will provide a solid prop for a fair and just solution. The United Nations, after adjustments to its biased attitude over recent years, may fulfil its lofty mission in the new times. Only in such conditions will the international community be able to fulfil its control and supervisory responsibilities regarding the implementation of the agreements to be concluded.

It goes without saying that a solution acceptable to all parties cannot be worked out overnight, and will be attained only in several stages. It remains that on all three planes — national, regional and international — the problem is ripe for a solution and is waiting for the parties concerned to show reason and common sense in order to find a common denominator, or more exactly, to arrive at a compromise.

The results achieved at the second international seminar on Indochina at Brisbane seem to have been multiplied thanks to the recent decision by Vietnam to complete its seventh volunteer troop withdrawal by the end of 1988. Under the terms of an agreement with the Government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea, Vietnam will repatriate 50,000 of its volunteer troops together with the Command of the Volunteer Force, pull back its combat forces 30 kilometres away from the Kampuchean — Thai frontier, and put the remaining 50,000 volunteer troops in Kampuchea under the direction of the Kampuchean High Command. Once again, by displaying goodwill and a high sense of responsibility, it has made another important step forward toward an eventual solution to the Kampuchea problem. This constructive attitude has been praised by broad-ranging public opinion. Vietnam is determined to do its utmost to settle a long-drawn-out dispute, in the interest of the Kampuchean people and for the sake of peace and stability in the region and in the world. In an international context in which both confrontation and the bloc spirit have become outdated, Vietnam wishes to go even further, toward building in Southeast Asia a consensus for peace, national independence, freedom, neutrality, friendship and cooperation.

Hanoi, 30 May 1988

A CORRECT ORIENTATION FOR OUR SCIENTIFIC-TECHNICAL ACTIVITIES

After 18 years of activity of the provisional liaison committee of Vietnamese scientific-technical associations, the Vietnam Union of Scientific-Technical Associations was set up on 26 March 1983. A voluntary organization of Vietnamese scientific-technical associations in the country and abroad, the Union is entrusted with the task of raising national scientific standards, popularising and applying scientific and technical progress to production, and acting as a consultant helping the State to formulate scientific and technical policies.

In the last five years, scientific-technical associations across the country have carried out a wide range of activities: scientific clubs, technical exhibitions, propagation of scientific knowledge through the mass media, publication of scientific materials, organization of symposiums and competitions, running of crash courses, etc.

At present, the Union groups 18 branch associations and five regional associations with a total membership of over 200,000. This year 14 more associations are being organized.

The Vietnam Union of Scientific-Technical Associations has long-standing relations with its counterparts in the socialist countries. It is a member of the "Alliance of Scientific-Technical Organizations of Socialist Countries", the "World Federation of Scientific-Technical Workers", and the "International Council of Scientific Associations".

There's no denying the fact that our Scientific-Technical Union is not yet equal to its self-imposed task and that it is still lagging behind in the present scientific-technical revolution. Partly owing to financial difficulties, there is a state of stagnation in the associations and an unhealthy concentration of their activities in the capital and other big cities. Although still in insufficient numbers, our scientific workers are not rationally employed. Although financial help is granted by the State to 70 national research programmes, mediocre results have so far been obtained. This is the consequence of the dissociation of scientific work from life. Vietnam has over 200 scientific institutes and over 80 higher-education establishments. But because they fail to fully meet the requirements of scientific research, many of them may soon be disbanded or merged with others. On the other hand, in our Northwest, a region having great agricultural and forest potentials but lying far from Hanoi and other major cities, there are no worthy agricultural institutes. Likewise, although agriculture is regarded as the forefront of the economic battle, the number of agricultural engineers working in farming and fishing cooperatives is quite small.

The reason is that the Party and the State have not paid due attention to scientific work and scientists. State policies in this field have failed to encourage the latter to work with zeal and develop their talents. For their part, the associations have not fully realized the important role which could be played in the application of science and technique, particularly in agriculture. A great number of scientific workers still regard their respective associations as a kind of clubs set up for form's sake, without any practical purpose. Meanwhile, the system of bureaucratic centralism and subsidy-based management has deterred them from deploying creative initiatives.

On 12 and 13 May 1988, the Second Congress of the Union of Scientific-Technical Associations was held in Hanoi with 146 participants, including 39 professors, 47 doctors and candidate doctors of science and 60 engineers. The report delivered at the Congress summed up five years of past activity and laid down new tasks for the future: close relationship between scientific research and socio-economic development; effective contribution to the elaboration of State policies through democratic discussions; propagation of scientific progress and renovation of the management of scientific and technical activities shifting from the bureaucratic subsidy-based system of management to the self-supporting system.

At the Congress, a Central Executive Council of 49 members was elected with Professor Ha Hoc Trac, member of the CPV CC, as President, and Trinh Van Tu, deputy-head of the CPV Scientific and Educational Commission, as Vice-President and General Secretary.

KIEN AN

THE HUMAN ELEMENT IN SCIENTIFIC WORK

Editor's Note: On 2 and 3 June 1988, the Nhan Dan *daily carried an article entitled "Some Reflections on Scientific Work" in which Professor Hoang Phe, a linguist, looks at some of the urgent problems facing scientific work in our country now undergoing renewal in all aspects of national life.*

Below are excerpts from the article related to the human element in scientific work. The title is ours.

An element of major importance for the development of science is the people doing scientific work. Indeed in this field cadre policy is a decisive factor. A correct policy will help train an increasing number of qualified scientists capable of rendering services to our country and mankind.

A correct cadre policy in science should reflect the Party's attitude and viewpoint in this field. A Party which values science will set great store by scientific workers and will help them devote all their time and energies to scientific work, achieve the highest efficiency, and make maximum contribution to the sciences. It will strive to foster talent, give the best training to and make the fullest use of experts. It will encourage creative work, and promote the formation and development of scientific schools in a number of disciplines (schools, not cliques). It will open wide the door to the outside world, and give scientists easy access to scientific information in the world, and not only in the socialist countries.

Regarding concrete policies and regimes, we should like to make the following suggestions:

First of all, there should be a correct policy regarding the training and use of experts. This does not mean special attention to be given by the Party, the Government or some top leaders to a number of individuals (for such an attitude on their part may easily be taken to mean favouritism and may lead to bad consequences), but a policy in the full sense of the word. Scientific work is creative brain work, in which the quality of the work and the talents of the worker should be stressed. Just as one hundred mediocre poets cannot equal a great poet, so one hundred run-of-the-mill scientific workers cannot match a talented scientist. In science, quantity cannot compensate for quality. Yet we have neglected much talents. True, in our country a number of scientists have been lucky enough to benefit conditions allowing them to develop their talents and so have become noted scientists. But luck has not smiled upon many others, whose talents have been overlooked. The point is that there should be a correct policy, to be supported by effective statutes, regulations and measures in such fields as selection of college students, of trainees to be sent abroad, of young scientists to be trained and fostered, and the employment of experts. The brain of a scientific expert is a precious capital, all the more so if the scientist is one with long-standing experience. We should make the best use of this capital, give the scientist the best working conditions available, and assign him for the most suitable task, so that he can devote his life to science and make maximum contribution to science and render the greatest services to his homeland.

Everyone knows that the US displays great boldness in employing scientists. They are given appropriate jobs regardless of their countries of origin and social background, provided they are willing to work for it. Many great scientific and technical advances have thus been achieved in the US by non-American-born scientists. With regard to our country, quite a few Vietnamese experts of international standard are at present working abroad. We should ponder over the situation. If we ascribe it solely to the fat salaries they get in the US and the other capitalist countries, this means failure on our part to understand the psychology and spirit of intellectuals in general, and scientists in particular.

The policies and concrete regimes regarding scientific workers within the country have a decisive effect on the thoughts and feelings of overseas Vietnamese intellectuals. A correct policy will encourage the latter to actively help build the foundations of science at home in various ways, and an increasing number of them will return home to work.

Freedom of thought and democracy in the sphere of learning are the vital conditions of progress in science. For a scientist nothing is more precious than truth. In many cases, intellectuals have been led

to Marxism-Leninism, to the revolution, by their search for truth. Truth is the fruit of uninterrupted discovery. Things that at one time seemed right may turn out to be wrong, and vice versa. State policies must ensure freedom of thought and encourage creativeness. One must draw a clear distinction between differences of viewpoints in the sphere of learning and those in politics, and take care not to make groundless inferences from the former.

In the sphere of learning, it is only natural that there should be different viewpoints. Indeed, it is through struggle between different schools of thought that science develops. This struggle may take place within an individual scientist. If a scientist changes his viewpoints, if he criticizes the stands he once adopted or approves of one he used to oppose, this changeover is perfectly admissible so long as it is the honest result of serious study. Passing judgement on points of learning cannot be hastily done, but should be supported by serious study, which may take a long time. The decisive word must be said by the scientists themselves, bearing in mind that in the sciences truth has not always stood on the side of the majority. This does not mean that there should be endless debates and never conclusions. Once there is enough ground to support it, a conclusion is to be made. But the scientist has the right to stick to his opinion, even when it has been condemned by most of his colleagues. However, he must bear full responsibility for it. He must be honest, and genuinely believe in the rightness of his theory or findings. Such is the way what has been called « the right to err in science » should be understood to mean.

Leading political cadres at any level should not arrogate to themselves the right to say the last word in questions of learning, but should display genuine respect for the opinions of scientists. They should be wary when stating their views concerning controversial matters in fields of learning. They should under no circumstances impose their personal opinions in such matters. Genuine science does not bow to power, only truth.

Differences in viewpoints may lead to the emergence of different schools of learning. A scientific school exists where there are systematic viewpoints and methods of study which have resulted in certain achievements. That is why the existence of contending schools in any branch of science is a normal phenomenon, which may even be the sign of advanced development due to the unhampered work of talented, creative scientists. The international interest in « Ton That Tung's school of liver surgery » is an eloquent example. Therefore, we should create conditions for the formation and development of genuine scientific schools in our country.

The most important condition for scientists to do good work is to get adequate information in their fields. Due to the tempestuous development of the sciences, literally every day brings new problems and new achievements. A subject being studied by a scientist can be, and is usually studied by other scientists in many parts of the world. Complete, prompt, and timely information will avoid duplication of research and provide clues to unsolved problems. Even in countries such as the Soviet Union and the US where many sciences are the most developed, and plentiful scientific information is available, there have been many cases of wasting time and money on work which has already been successfully done by others. Thus lack of information not only causes waste, but also hampers creation.

Given our country's backwardness in science and technology, and our wish to rapidly catch up with world standards, we should make the best use of other people's experiences and take shortcuts by relying on the latest achievements of world science and technology. We should engage in new pivotal research, and tackle problems that will yield us the most profitable results. To this effect abundant and timely information must be made available to our scientists.

In our times, no country can rank first in the world in all branches of science and even in all ramifications of a given discipline. In many fields of science and technology the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries are not in the lead, and may even be lagging behind in certain fields. That is why they are broadening their relations and contacts in science and technology with the advanced capitalist countries. We should do the same.

Scientific information is available through many channels: books, newspapers and other mass media, personal contacts between scientists through exchanges of correspondence and materials, and at international conferences. For scientists such personal contacts are of great importance, and are often most fruitful. Our own experience has told us that the more numerous those personal contacts, the better our scientists can develop their talents. Indeed, most scientists in the world maintain wide-ranging personal contacts with each other. These contacts may sometimes give rise to certain problems. But if by alleging the (problematic) possibility of such problems we should try to reduce personal contacts between our scientists and those of other countries, this would mean to opt for the more serious evil. We would condemn ourselves to the fate of « a frog sitting at the bottom of a well, hearing little, seeing little, and knowing little of the world". ●

ERADICATING ILLITERACY IN OUT-OF-THE-WAY PLACES

Less than one week after the Declaration of Independence (2 Sept. 1945), the Provisional Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam led by President Ho Chi Minh issued Decree Number 19/SL of 8 September 1945 on the organization of evening classes for peasants and workers, aimed at eradicating illiteracy throughout the country.

Twenty-one years later, in 1986, the General Assembly of UNESCO officially made 8 September the annual International Day for the Eradication of Illiteracy in order to help arouse world concern about the illiteracy problem and its social consequences.

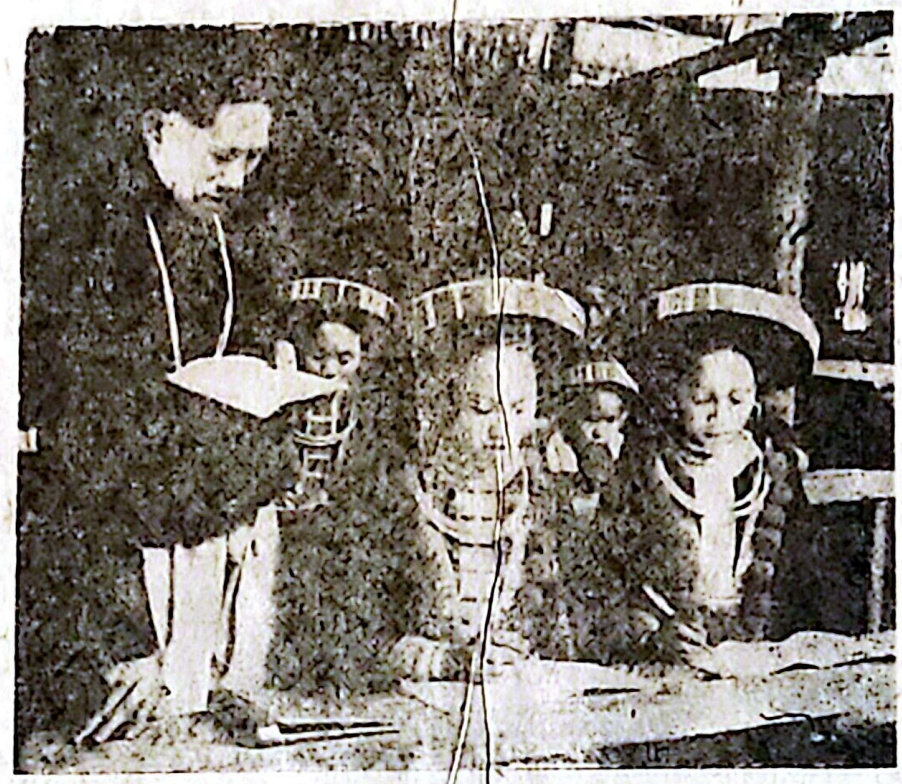
Thus, for the Vietnamese people, 8 September each year is a day of both national and international significance. For several decades now, through both practical action and the contribution of their experience, the Vietnamese people have done their share in the campaign for the eradication of illiteracy in the world. In our effort, we have received substantial support and assistance from our friends in many countries.

At present, there remain in the world about 889 million illiterates aged 15 and upwards, of whom over 60% are women and over 70% live in Asia and the Pacific region. It is estimated that failing greater efforts worldwide, the number of illiterates may reach 900 million by the beginning of the next century. Conscious of the danger, many countries, especially the developing ones, have worked out and striven to implement programmes aimed at reducing and eventually eliminating illiteracy among their populations. In the quarter-century from 1960 to 1985 the world illiteracy rate dropped to 32% from 39.3%. In particular, from 1970 to 1985, 860 million adults in the world learnt to read and write, three-quarters of whom were citizens of developing nations.

In this great undertaking, UNESCO has taken innovative and effective action to help those countries, such as promoting and stimulating initiative, giving massive amounts of books and films, organizing seminars, granting annual international awards, providing direct assistance by sending specialists and aid — technical, material and financial — to help boost and sustain literacy campaigns, upgrading planning work, improving personnel training, publishing text-books, materials and documents for students and teachers of literacy courses, etc. Of late, UNESCO has initiated the "Education for All" programme aimed at stepping up the anti-illiteracy campaign and universalizing primary education and post-literacy activities. It is also making urgent preparations for the International Year for the Eradication of Illiteracy (1990) which will hopefully usher in a decade of complete eradication of illiteracy, to be followed by a millennium without illiteracy.

In Vietnam, ever since the August 1945 Revolution, the anti-illiteracy campaign has been considered an integral part of the revolution.

On the anti-illiteracy front, we have obtained great achievements. Before 1945, the illiteracy rate was 95 per cent; today the bulk of our people can read and write. Better still, we have trained a large body of intellectuals with university and post-graduate education. However,



A class in the highlands.

Photo: VNA

A complementary education class.

Photo: VNA

the anti-illiteracy task has not been fully accomplished. Illiteracy still lingers in a number of localities, especially in the mountain regions, the remote areas of South Vietnam, the off-shore islands and out-of-the-way villages along the coast, where the illiteracy rate has of late even tended to increase. Meanwhile, the effort for the universalisation of primary education has barely started, and the threat remains of a relapse into illiteracy in the case of many people who have escaped it. In face of this situation, while laying down our tasks in education for the 1986-1990 period, the 6th Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam, held in 1986, called for intensified efforts to eradicate illiteracy in these areas and universalise primary education among children.

In execution of the Party resolution, the educational department has worked out a programme for the period 1987-1990 including a chapter for the eradication of illiteracy and the universalisation of primary education, which it started to implement on 8 September 1987.

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From our own activities and the experiences of other countries, we have drawn very useful lessons and have striven to apply them.

First of all, we regard the eradication of illiteracy as an integral part of our programme for social, cultural and economic development, aimed at removing a major obstacle to national development, by raising the cultural standards of the mass of the working people. On the other hand, we bear in mind that without a certain level of economic, cultural and social development, there will be no popular need for better education, no conditions for acquiring education, and no practical possibility to organize education on a mass scale.

The Central Highlands is a case in point. Several years ago when we started the anti-illiteracy campaign in this mountain region inhabited by ethnic minorities, our repeated efforts to teach the alphabet to the population ended in failure. Members of those mountain tribes did not see why they should learn it. But after the first State farms had been founded and manpower was recruited among them, a new mode of production and a new life style began to prevail. There arose the necessity to learn and use the written language and acquiring an education became a pressing need. In its turn, the eradication of illiteracy became a powerful force contributing to economic development, the building of a new life, and the emergence of a new type of man. This is a very convincing example of the integration of the literacy campaign into the fabric of economic, social and cultural development.

Secondly, the anti-illiteracy campaign must be made an integral part of an offensive on three fronts: eradication of illiteracy among the adult population, universalisation of primary education among the children, and organisation of permanent educational activities.

More than once, in the past, we declared the eradication of illiteracy to have been basically completed while we had failed to lay a firm foundation for the universalisation of primary education. This proved to be a premature assertion, and an illustration of this rule: so long as one has not accomplished all three fundamental tasks, viz., 1/providing all school-age children with primary education; 2/helping them maintain what they have learnt and 3/ensuring that they have acquired the essential knowledge and adopted the behaviour of children with this

degree of education, illiteracy cannot yet be regarded as having been completely rooted out.

By the same token, if a milieu is not created in which the new adult literates and the children who have completed primary education can maintain, consolidate and develop their skills in writing, reading and arithmetic, their eventual relapse into illiteracy is almost a certainty.

According to recent surveys, illiteracy even in the developed countries has reached unexpected dimensions. Instead of what is known as "absolute illiteracy", a situation known as "loss of literacy" has appeared in those industrialized countries, where many young men and women who have finished primary education eventually lose their ability to read and write simply because they haven't had the opportunity to use the written language.

Thirdly, for effective results, the learners must be given the opportunity to use their skills in the three R's in daily life. In the past a learner was considered literate when he could recognize all the letters of the alphabet, combine them into words, and slowly make out simple texts. This was no guarantee against his relapse into illiteracy. Many studies conducted in the world have reached this conclusion: a learner can be considered literate only after completing primary education. In our country, this means that he has fulfilled the minimum requirements in the three R's for a student of the third year of complementary education. In concrete terms he must be able to read and understand simple news items, write simple sentences without committing such mistakes as to impair understanding, and do simple sums. Generally speaking, if the anti-illiteracy campaign is to make steady progress, the content and method of teaching must proceed from the needs and capabilities of the learner, and the objectives set must correspond with the practical conditions of the locality.

Revising their lessons.

Photo: VNA

Fourthly, the eradication of illiteracy is an integral part of the ideological and cultural revolution and so must be the work of the masses. There would be slim hopes of success if it did not receive support and guidance from the local Party committee and administration and involve the participation of the entire population, and if it could not mobilize materials, equipment and funds from many sources (the State and the people, the central and local levels). These will not be easy to secure in the present economic conditions of the country, but failing them, it will not be possible to eradicate illiteracy in the areas where it still persists. That is why the Ministry of Education has called upon teachers and students in all general-education schools as well as cadres of the educational department to take part in the anti-illiteracy campaign. The Ministry has also appealed for the active assistance of all mass organisations and State-owned and collective enterprises. To eradicate illiteracy and universalise primary education is a very arduous job but it is the minimum basis for building a cultural foundation for the nation. We shall undertake this momentous job actively and resolutely but without precipitation and without caring only for numbers. Facts have shown that if we don't pay enough attention to the substance of the movement, only a short time after the "reviewing conferences" and "celebrations of successes" we shall lose ground and eventually be back to square one after spending a lot of time, money and labour. It would be relevant to recall in this connection these words of Lenin: "In matters of culture, precipitation and rashness are indeed very harmful."

VU NGOC BINH

A CONTROVERSIAL PLAY

Recently, there have appeared before the Vietnamese public a number of literary works, musical compositions, plays, paintings, and films which have given rise to controversy. Opinions about them have sharply differed. Against the background of the current renewal of thinking in Vietnam's socio-political life, this should be regarded as a normal phenomenon.

Controversy is bound to arise because in their works, the artists express their attitudes to life, which cover a wide spectrum. The differing stands they have taken as artists and citizens cannot leave readers and spectators indifferent. In their turn, the latter, as well as the critics, take sides, and express a broad range of opinions.

A case in point is the play « Truong Ba's Soul and the Butcher's Body » staged by the Vietnam Drama Company. The playwright is Luu Quang Vu; the director, Nguyen Dinh Nghi. The play has attracted a great deal of interest and has been performed more than a hundred times in different places. Tens of reviews have appeared in national newspapers and magazines. Generally the play has been highly praised. But there have also been adverse criticisms.

Both favourable and unfavourable reviews praise Luu Quang Vu as a prolific author. Over the past ten years he has written an amazing number of plays, more than 40 of which have been staged. With « Truong Ba's Soul and the Butcher's Body », he has proved his ability to treat themes with philosophical implications.

The play is based on a folk tale, which had inspired an old classical opera, « Truong the Butcher ». But Luu Quang Vu has given the tale a topical character and treated the contradictions it contains in depth, as well as with humour and wit. The audience is faced with today's problems although the story is about the past.

The story: Truong Ba is a kind-hearted, noble-spirited, and gentle-mannered man who plays chess beautifully. He is living in peace in his village with his family when a sudden end is put to his life because *Bac Dau* and *Nam Tao*, two gods in charge of registers at the court of the Heavenly Emperor who governs the destinies of all men, cross out his name by mistake from the roll of the living. But then another god, De Thich, who is a chess addict and highly appreciates Truong Ba's skill at the game, wants the man to live on so that he can occasionally go down among mortals in some disguise and play with him. Unfortunately, he learns about Truong Ba's death too late, when his body has begun to decay. So he has Truong Ba's soul enter the body of a pork-butcher who has just died. The butcher is an earthy man with coarse manners and vulgar tastes, who drinks and swears and beats his wife. So conflicts arise between the refined spirit of Truong Ba and the brutish body of the butcher, and also between Truong Ba — Butcher and his family. Peace and happiness are lost to everybody.

So, it is only a humorous folk story. But in Luu Quang Vu's treatment, it becomes one of human tragedy, and the plot assumes philosophical depth.

Some spectators view the play as a thrust at bureaucratism and corruption: the negligence of the two celestial registrars is at the origin of the tragedy and the clumsy intervention of greedy village officials only makes matters worse.

Others look at the play from a sociological viewpoint. They hold that although Truong Ba is a good man, he represents the past, an outdated way of life which can no longer prevail, while the coarse butcher represents a rising materialistic force which will take society forward and so wins in the end.

Luu Quang Vu, in the eyes of those critics, takes an « utopian » stand when he seems to uphold the chess-player's refined tastes and kind feelings against the pork-butcher's gross materialism.

Other spectators deeply sympathize with Truong Ba, or rather with his soul, locked as it is in hopeless combat with the pork-butcher's body, which

refuses to obey its noble inclination. Evil gradually drives back Good, which deteriorates more and more. The tragedy reaches its climax when Truong Ba's grand-daughter refuses to see that his spirit lives on in the body of the butcher, and when his wife moans out: « Although I am living with a man with your soul, I feel that I am being unfaithful to you. » One thinks of a man with a fine, pure spirit engulfed in an unwholesome, turbid environment which finally defeats him.

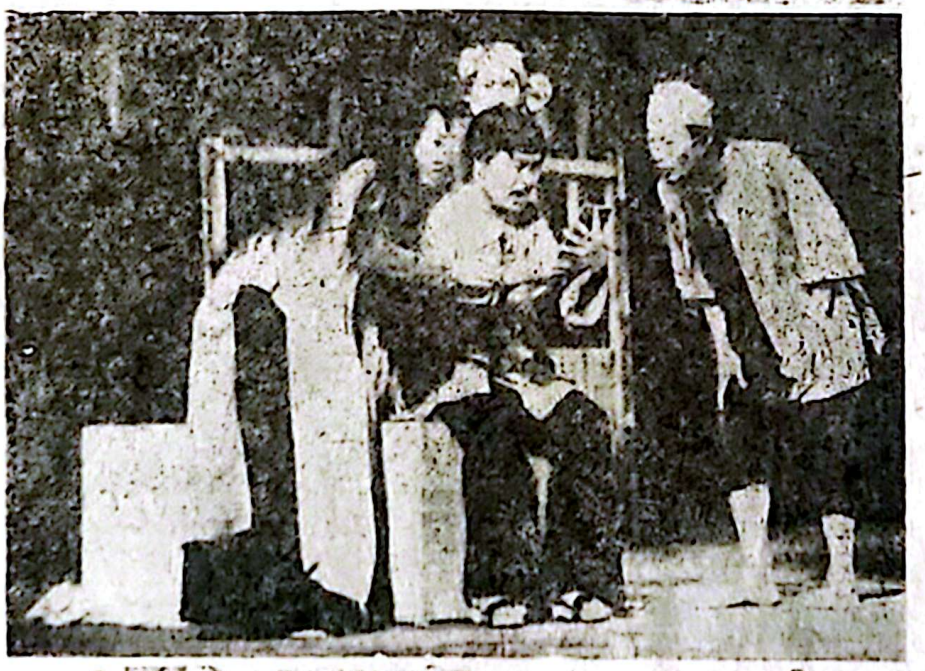
In our view, the playwright's message is that man is a unity of soul and body. To destroy this unity is very dangerous, even criminal. Indeed, the crime may be committed in the name of kindness or even inspired by some noble motive. In the story, a well-meaning god helps the spirit of Truong Ba to continue living, albeit in another man's body. But by so doing, he destroys the man's individuality, and as a result Truong Ba, and his relatives and friends, suffer even worse torments. The message is simple, yet profound: "Men, be careful. There are mistakes that cannot be redressed. Don't try to correct them by committing worse mistakes, the worst of them being to destroy the victim's personality."

The plot should perhaps have concentrated on that theme, but it did not, in our view, and instead seems to have diverted the spectators' attention to a more topical theme, the struggle against "negative phenomena".

At any rate, a play is written to be put on the stage before the public. Here we must acknowledge the merits of the cast, who are artistes of the Vietnam Drama Company and especially of the director. Director Nguyen Dinh Nghi is well known to Hanoi audiences but in "Truong Ba's Soul and the Butcher's Body" he has truly surpassed himself. In this tragi-comedy he has not let the comedy spoil the tragedy, nor vice versa. A veritable tour de force.

Actor Trong Khoi, who plays the complex character that Truong Ba — Butcher is, must be commended for his excellent performance.

VU KIEN — NGUYEN VINH



A scene in the play.

Photo: DINH QUANG THANH

BROADCASTING IN VIETNAM

Editor's Note: Many of our readers in North and Central Africa would like to know more about the activities and organization of the Voice of Vietnam Radio.

Our correspondent at the Voice of Vietnam Radio Quang Minh gives the following answer.

Loudspeakers serving a commune.

Photo: CAN TUNG

Right after the founding of our young Republic (2 September 1945) the Vietnam revolutionary State set up a radio broadcasting station, known as the Voice of Vietnam.

At present, besides that Central Station there are 40 others in provinces and cities; 264 ultra short-wave (FM) transmitters in districts, and more than 9,000 wire-broadcasting stations in towns, districts, communes and hamlets. Over the past years, more than 2,000 communes in the Northern border provinces and 350 communes in the Central Highlands have set up wire-broadcasting systems. By late 1987, 13 of the country's 40 provinces and cities including Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh and Hai Phong cities, An Giang, Dong Nai, Cuu Long, Ben Tre, Tien Giang, Phu Khanh, Nghia Binh, Hau Giang and Quang Nam-Da Nang provinces and the Vung Tau-Con Dao Special zone, had been covered by wire-broadcasting networks.

Owing to a deficient power grid, 50% of the wire-broadcasting stations are powered by small hydro-power stations, batteries, or solar panels. Prospective progress in electrification in the early nineties will still fail to extend the national grid to many remote areas of the country.

At present there are in Vietnam nearly 2 million wireless sets and over 600,000 loudspeakers. For a population of more than 60 million, this figure is indeed too low. Moreover, both radio sets and loudspeakers connected to wire-broadcasting networks are unevenly distributed: they are mostly concentrated in Hanoi and other big cities while lacking in the countryside, especially the mountain and remote rural areas.

Nevertheless, the Voice of Vietnam and the wire-broadcasting system have been playing a very useful role. The printed press is handicapped by poor economic conditions, especially soaring price of paper and printing costs. So, the development of both radio and wire broadcasting is a great help. However, facilities are still scanty and the programmes lack variety and attraction. Investment is still inadequate.

Our broadcasting system has been contributing to the drive for renovation and democratization in our country's socio-political life. It could have done an even better job if provided with sufficient equipment. At present, even repair facilities are lacking because of the shortage of funds.

Eager to work for renovation, workers in the broadcasting system and related branches of activity are joining efforts to improve their work. Facts show that a good principle to follow to attain this end is to deploy joint action by both the State and the people, and by both the Centre and the localities, and to strive for sufficient and rational investment. To this end, the State should draw up a plan for systematic socio-economic development in general and for the promotion of broadcasting in particular. Radio and wire broadcasting and such facilities as video-cassette recorders should be made available to the populations of all regions, including the border areas and offshore islands.

The Voice of Vietnam broadcasts many daily programmes in foreign languages (English, French, Spanish, Japanese, Indonesian, Thai, Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Russian, Lao and Khmer).

All these programmes are broadcast on the 25, 31 and 41 metre bands. Those beamed to French-speaking Africa are broadcast at 1.30; 2.30; 4.00 and 20.00 hours (Hanoi time) that is 18.30; 19.30; 21.00 and 13.00 hours (G.M.T.) on the 19, 25 and 31 metre bands. We welcome criticisms, ideas and suggestions from our listeners abroad.

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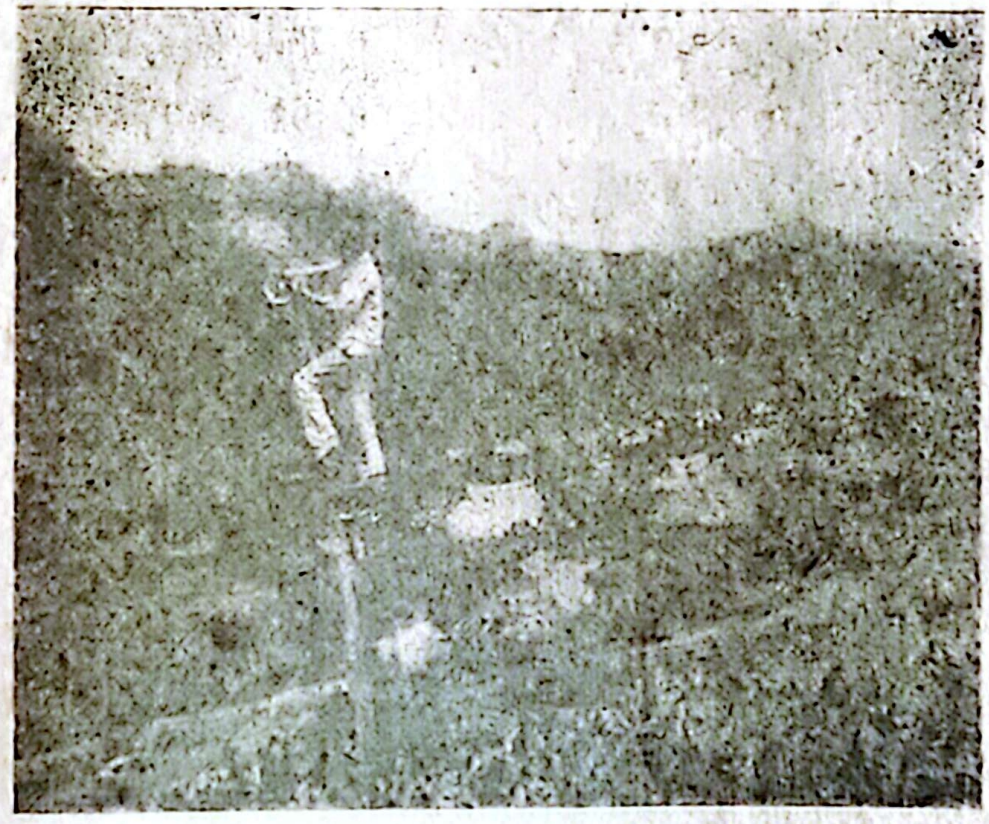

— A broadcasting station at the Dien Quang cooperative (Quang Nam — Da Nang).

Photo: THANH TUNG

CHRONOLOGY • CHRONOLOGY

(15 May — 14 June)

MAY

15. The Vietnamese stand at the 1988 International Paris Fair is awarded a silver medal.

— Holding in Montreuil (suburbs of Paris) of the Fifth Congress of the Association of Vietnamese in France with the participation of 380 delegates. The Congress discusses an eventual renewal in the Association's activities and elects an executive committee with Huynh Trung Dong as its President.

17 — 19. Moscow : Holding of the 127th session of the Executive Committee of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. The session approves draft programmes for multilateral cooperation between European member countries and Vietnam, Cuba and Mongolia.

18 — 23. Hanoi : Holding of a national solo singing contest ; 32 contestants win prizes at the first and second rounds, held in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City respectively.

19. *Hanoi :* Vietnam and India sign a contract on oil and gas exploration and exploitation on the continental shelf of southern Vietnam.

20. The SRV State Council promulgates the Law on Accounting and Statistics.

22. *Hanoi :* Holding of a symposium by the National Council on the Compilation of a Vietnamese Encyclopaedia. The problem of the translation of the Soviet Encyclopaedia is discussed with a view to unifying style, terminologies and transcriptions of proper nouns in 22 fields.

24 — 25. Hanoi : Holding of an informal meeting between members of the CPV Central Committee Secretariat and General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh on the one hand, and on the other, editors-in-chief of central newspapers and radio stations, and a number of editors, correspondents, and retired but still active veteran journalists.

25 — 26. 800,000 basic general-educational school pupils throughout the country sit for school-leaving examinations.

26. The SRV Defence Ministry announces the withdrawal of the Vietnamese Volunteer Troops Command and of 50,000 men from Kampuchea in 1988.

+ The SRV Ministry of Foreign Affairs issues a statement hailing all efforts aimed at giving an impulse to the negotiation process for a political settlement of the Kampuchea issue. (See article in this issue)

+ Setting up of a Vietnam Union for Peace, Solidarity, and Friendship, a broadly-based organization comprising the Vietnam Peace Committee, the Vietnam Committee for Solidarity with Asian and African Peoples, and various associations and committees for solidarity with other countries.

27. News item in the daily *Nhan Dan :* The European Economic Community is sending to Vietnam 10,000 tonnes of rice by care of the World Food Programme, as aid to food-short areas.

29 — 30. Havana : SRV Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach attends a ministerial-level conference on disarmament of the Coordination Committee of the Non-Aligned Countries (See article in this issue).

JUNE

1 — 2. Budapest : Vietnam attends a regular conference of Secretaries of Communist and Workers' Parties of member countries of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance.

1 — 3. SRV Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach pays a friendship visit to Mexico.

2 — 3. Nearly 290,000 secondary general-education school pupils and 96,000 secondary-level complementary-education pupils sit for school-leaving examinations.

4 — 10. A delegation of the State Commission for Science and Technique led by Dang Huu, member of the CPV Central Committee and Head of the Commission, pays an official friendship visit to Albania.

5. The Vietnam Federation of Trade Unions issues a statement hailing the « Peace Wave 88 » movement.

8. Nguyen Van Linh, General Secretary of the CPV Central Committee, receives B.N. Chaplin, alternate member of the CPSU Central Committee, Deputy-Foreign Minister, and special envoy of the Soviet leadership, coming to Vietnam to inform the Vietnamese leadership of the results of the Soviet-US summit in Moscow. General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh warmly welcomes the results reached at the summit and expresses Vietnam's total support for Soviet efforts aimed at completely eliminating nuclear weapons.

8 — 10. Ho Chi Minh City : Holding of a national symposium on «The Canonization of Martyrs and Vietnamese National History".

8 — 11. *Vientiane :* A delegation of the Mekong Committee of Vietnam led by Dinh Gia Khanh, Vice-Minister of Water Conservancy, attends the 27th session of the International Interim Mekong Committee.

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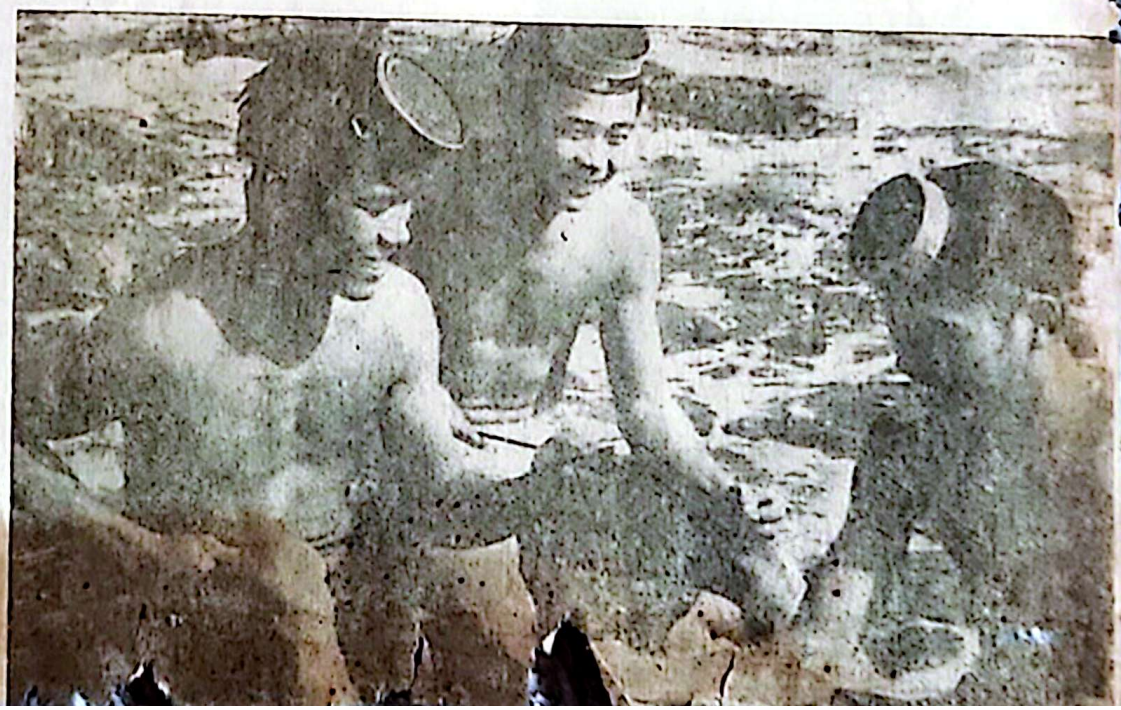
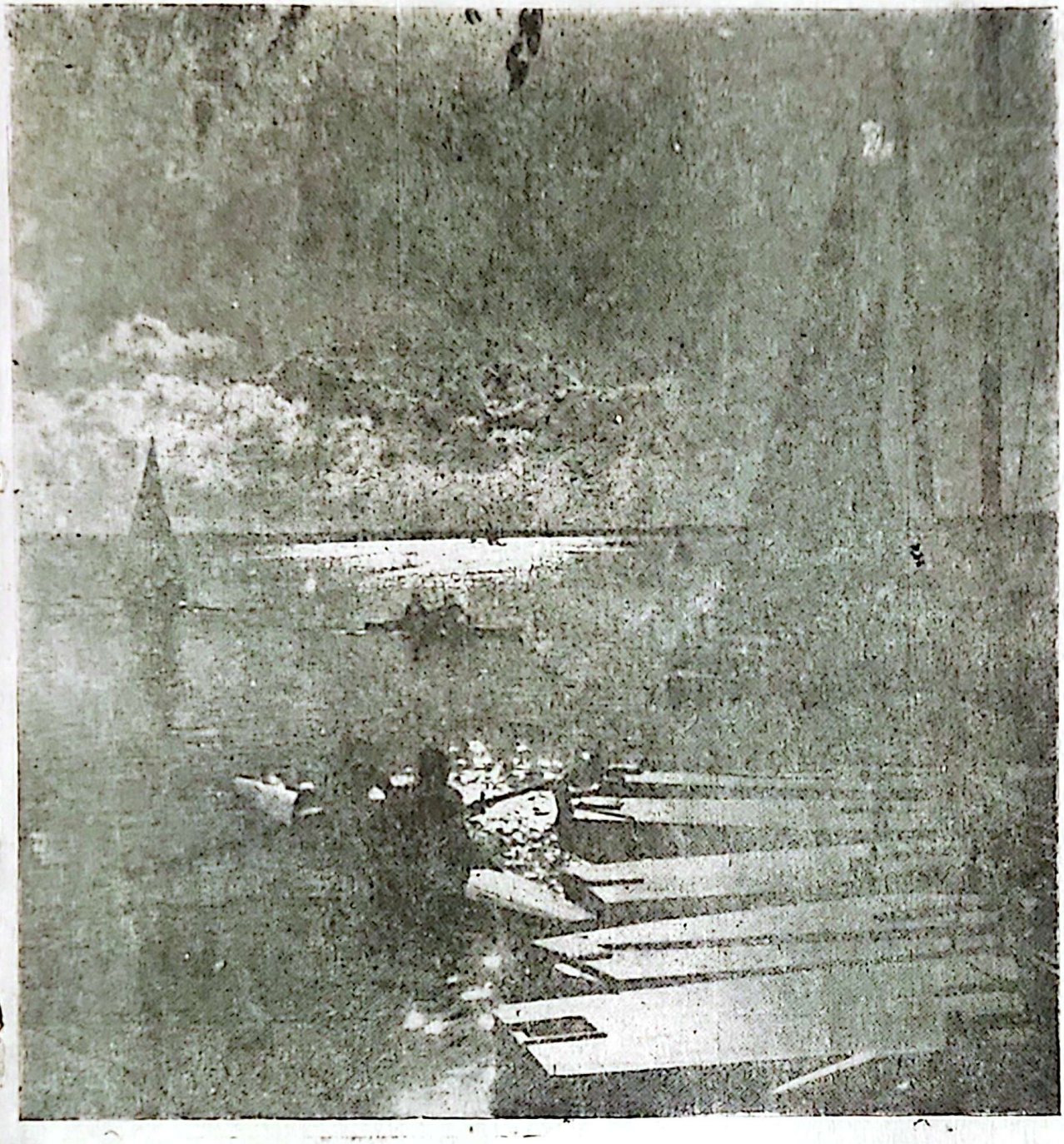
Photographs by Bang Sam

● *Sea birds.*

● *Offering flowers to soldiers.*



● *Catching abalones.*



● *Sunset on the West Lake in Hanoi.*

Photo : HUU NEN

VIETNAM
Courier

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